A Man Without a Smile

A MAN WITHOUT PRINCIPLE

?

BY

RETSEL TERREVE pseud.

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Lester E. Broyles
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In "A Man Without Principle?" we believe we are presenting to the public the masterpiece of Twentieth Century fiction. We shall not undertake to tell you why. No intelligent and analytical reader, having perused and weighed this work, will stand in need of such enlightenment.

THE PUBLISHERS.

PROLOGUE

There was nothing unusual in his birth. A typical town of the western states; a modest home on a respectable street; a room, comfortable, plain and clean; the usual complement of husband, doctor, nurse and mother; and then — an ugly, red-faced human bit; a strong-lunged, husky, kicking boy. But nothing in time, place nor event prophetic of the man. Infancy, childhood passed. No abnormal mental streaks; no precocious traits that mark a defect in the organism of the brain. Merely an ordinary lad; healthy, good-natured, honest; working and playing with equal zest, and deriving from each the best it had to give. A normal type of boyhood, to whom the range of choice in life was wide; from bridge to stokehole; president to page. Of basis for prediction there was none.

But mark you now, Destiny's first distinguishable touch. The father died, unpreparedly so far as it referred to earthly things, and rent and clothing, fuel and food, these were still existent needs. The mother toiled bravely against the uneven odds. But woman's toil in a crisis such as this becomes ofttimes impotent to either conquer want or turn despair to rout. Here, then, the need for manhood's strength was evident. On son, not mother, inexorable Fate placed her decree. He heard the call and answered. Robbed of his natural birthright, youth—golden epoch in the memories of men, he bridged the gulf of years, stooped to the yoke, and on the shoulders of a child assumed the burdens of maturity. The teens were passed. The boy became a factor in the local world. Serious duties gave birth to sober thoughts, and ambition guided wisely both his studies and his work.

So manhood, long since reached in deeds, now came in years. And then — the siren cry; then called the greater, mystic, outside world. With magic touch it played upon his heart's responsive chords the most entrancing melodies of life. It sang of fortune, fame and joy.

It placed before his willing eyes the crystal ball of hope, within whose liquid depths the flights of fancy seemed as living deeds. In pageants rare the marshalled hosts of man's desires swept in review. Each bowed obeisance as it passed, for all were servants of his will. Destiny, heedless of the means, had made illusion serve her ends. Beyond the rainbow of promise the land of disenchantment lay. Satan, in the pot of gold, had found the bribe of life.

Years passed. Men's recollections of the man, his family, and his youth grew faint. What trails he'd blazed, what contests won, what heights or depths his life had touched, none who knew him in his early days could tell. Now and then vague rumors came of strange import. Some told of prestige in commercial fields, some of failures, some of want, and some — low spoken — gave deep hints of darker things. Finally, indifference followed doubt, and then — forgetfulness.

Cynicism had scored again. Man's consistency to man was still the Ignis Fatuus of life.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I.

The afternoon of Sunday, December the twenty-fourth, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, will, with its attendant happenings, ever stand pre-eminent in the history of the Men's Christian League of New York City, as an epoch-making date.

This organization, originally formed by a few of the more aggressive spirits of the Methodist religion, still bore, at the time of which we write, the earmarks of that faith. An institution entirely disassociated from the church, it had, nevertheless, hitherto worked in harmony with it. Indeed, judged by its works, the founders' idea may well have been to consider first the welfare of the Wesleyan youth; to direct and help him in his daily life; and then, this done, to offer other men a guiding and assisting hand; to urge acceptance of the faith (always providing the object of their solicitude possessed a reputation undefiled by taint of criminality), and to exercise unceasing vigilance in preventing the commission of a wrong, to the entire exclusion of efforts looking toward the reformation of those, who chancing to err, were unfortunate enough to have been found out. Under a policy comparatively narrow in its scope its field of effort marked a compromise between the work within and that lying just without the established province of the church. The atmosphere of orthodoxy was everywhere in evidence. Compared with organizations recognizing neither race nor color, history nor creed in the saving of a soul, its self-restricted field seemed small. Its purpose, however, was a definite one; its efforts, if conservative, were conducted along harmonious and consistent lines. If its growth in membership and influence was apparently slow, it was nevertheless of a substantial kind; a condition, perhaps, after all offering the safest test of merit. Of adequate means, it had erected a home embodying features designed to meet the religious and educational,

as well as the social requirements of its members. In brief, despite its self-imposed and manifest limitations in a field of labor practically horizonless, it had proved no mean instrument for the cause of right, occupying an assured position among that class of institutions whose beneficent influence is reflected in a gradually clearing state of public conscience.

But recently the rigid tenets of Wesleyanism were, under pressure of the younger blood, beginning slowly to surrender to the broader spirit of the age. The last election of League officers had eliminated largely for the first time, a bigotic element which had hitherto dominated the management, rendering possible the substitution of a more liberal and aggressive policy by those to whom the reins of control had passed. As yet, however, no radical departure from established lines had signalized this transfer of power. No formal declaration by the new administration of principles to be adopted in conducting the League's affairs had given opening for discussion or dissent. That a policy more in keeping with the necessities of the times was being carefully formulated was a matter of universal knowledge. When, or in what manner, the change would manifest itself still remained a matter of anxiety and doubt. On the particular date of which we write, however, an occurrence incident to the regular Sunday service held in the society's auditorium, effectually disposed of any lingering hopes entertained by the ultra-conservatives that the organization's fundamental policy (which, as before hinted, made an unimpeachable moral record a condition essential to membership) would remain practically unaltered. At all times the League's Sabbath afternoon meetings — open to public and members alike — were of a character sufficiently attractive to insure a comfortable filling of the hall. Today a program of unusual merit had been arranged. The seating capacity of the auditorium proved inadequate, nor was the standing room less overtaxed. The Monday following would usher in the Christmas holidays, and music, sermon, prayers—all were appropriate for the occasion. In each the theme was Christian love and charity. The audience, in receptive mood, gave inspiration to the chief speaker of the day. He retold the story of the love divine; of the duty man

owes to fellow man. He forced conviction by his logic, and with an eloquence born of sincere belief drove the message home. When he ceased speaking, a momentary silence ensued, that greatest tribute to the orator's gifts and power. Then the applause, prolonged and warm — inevitable sequel to the calm. Following this came another prayer, and song. Then the secretary of the League arose, lifted his hand in appeal for silence, and said:

"Men, you need no introduction to the next speaker, the Chairman of our Executive Committee, Mr. Hope, who has a word to say."

Even as he spoke another figure had arisen and, to the music of renewed applause, advanced toward the platform's front. Secretary Patterson was right. To introduce Stanley Hope to that assemblage would have been the veriest kind of rot. Was there a man present who failed to recognize in him a personal, loyal friend? Was not he, the hope and leader of the new régime, the bulliest fellow that ever drew a breath; a brother to them all; one whose word with them was law at any time, or any place, for any thing? What, introduce this man! One might, indeed, as well send coals to Newcastle, or to Cardiff, in the south of Wales. Jolly funny action that would be, in truth. The applause burst forth again. Patterson retreated to his seat. He had said enough in telling them the League's official head desired to speak.

Stanley Hope, man of wealth, important factor in the business world, was yet a living argument in favor of a consistent Christian life. He belonged to the type of manhood that believes in sunshine; in physical as well as moral health and strength; in cleanliness of body as an aid to purity of mind. He believed in sports and songs; in hustle and in toil; in the aggressive art of doing good; in permanent friendships; in loyalty to duty wherever found; in the truth at all times and under all conditions; in talking fearlessly and to the point when necessity required; in gentle, kindly words and acts with which to help the other man to rise; and in living, day in, day out, along consistent, unwavering lines, the life he felt was in harmony with the teachings of his Lord. Of slender but athletic build; a head as perfect in contour as the life its owner led; fair haired, blue eyed,

high browed, chin strong, and firm lips shielded by a cropped mustache; a face that told of power, decision and confidence, as surely as it did of kindliness, integrity and love. Such was the mould in which the man was cast. Such was Stanley Hope, who having commanded quiet with a deprecating gesture, now began to speak.

"Fellows, less than a year ago there was a young chap in this city, broke. He was an ambitious, educated, good kind of fellow, but in several ways a fool. He came here with a fortune and a bride; then bucked Wall Street. You men can guess his finish. He did then, what you or I probably would have done — kept his troubles from his family. His wife, in her loyalty, was brave enough to do the same. Finally they landed in the dead of winter in some tenement over on the East Side. Probably had a bed, table and a couple of chairs. They didn't have any food or fire. The chap hustled for work, but had no trade. Office positions require references, and that meant a give-away to his friends. Then the blizzard came and the wife fell sick. Well, a questionable opportunity for raising money came and he seized it. There was fire and food and medicine. Whether you or I would have done the same isn't here nor there. Nor is it in our province here, to pass judgment on him. Today he is in one of our state reformatories awaiting release on parole, while his wife is living among her friends. His record is the cleanest in the history of the institution; his stay the shortest. A condition necessary to his release is that he first secure employment. This has been promised him, and I expect to shake his hand within the next ten days. Now, men, you've been listening to and applauding a sermon that told you of the joys of giving. I'm going to ask you to begin putting this to the test. This chap has got to tackle the world again possessed of nothing but the suit he wears. I propose that this League help him to enter the fray equipped half way right. I want to see him a member here. I want to see this association of ours make the success of that man and the happiness of his wife a shining testimonial not only to our belief in the teachings of Christ, but to the effectiveness with which we put that belief into practice. Now,

while we sing number twenty-one, I want to see everybody get busy and dig. Ushers, start back at the doors and don't miss anybody. If they haven't brought money enough along, take their notes."

The scene following Hope's remarkable appeal was one unprecedented in the history of the League. For an instant not a man in the audience moved. The ushers stood as if paralyzed. The organist might, so far as appearances were concerned, have been thrown temporarily into a hypnotic trance. The Chairman, walking toward his seat, half turned as if surprised at the singular effect his words had wrought. Suddenly a long, low whistle came from somewhere in the gallery. Then, somebody turning, knocked an umbrella to the floor; the organist with a start recovered control of his benumbed faculties; the instrument pealed forth the well-known hymn; the ushers seized the collection baskets; and then a shout, a hurrah, like unto nothing the staid old hall had ever heard before. A few of the members struggled hard to sing; others applauded, stamped with their feet, pounded with canes and umbrellas, waved handkerchiefs, shook hands, and in general gave evidence of wild, disordered minds. Disregarding for a time the united appeals of Hope and Patterson for order; forgetful of the day's sanctity and the behavior due it; innocent of any intention looking to its desecration, the assemblage had taken advantage of the opening given to indulge in an outburst of feelings long pent up. If the display of enthusiasm appeared inopportune, the provocative cause was fully understood by Hope. For his had been an adroit and a diplomatic move. His short, crisp speech had done more than tell the story of a man in need. It signalized a revolution in the conduct of the League. From a régime encrusted with the timeworn policies of orthodox design the society had passed to the control of a new and progressive administerial power, where pessimism, prejudice and precedent (the triple "p's" significant of decay) would have small chance to thrive. This, virtually, was the announcement conveyed in the Chairman's words. It meant adherence to a broader view of life; it heralded the adoption as a working principle by the League of that theory which recognizes the brotherhood of all men; it eliminated at a stroke the hitherto

unquestioned influence of the church, as such, opening the doors to all well-intentioned applicants of whatever faith, or of no faith at all. It disclosed a firm determination to change at once and for all time a course that held the opportunities of today in bondage to dead precepts of the past. In the thirty years of the League's existence no member had dared suggest the attempted reformation of a man on whom the State had placed its ban, much less request the transfer of his name direct from prison records to the members' ledger of that exclusive organization. It was a direct challenge; a supreme test of strength, and offered at the psychological time. Was ever change of policy so radical announced in words so few and apparently so irrelevant?

The commotion gradually subsided. The last refrain of the thrice-repeated hymn died away; and then, mingled with the buzz of low-toned voices, one heard the clink of dropping coins and the rustle of crisp, green-hued paper bills. This, too, was more than mere response to Charity's request. It signified approval of the course implied in their Chairman's words. It was an endorsement of what was, to all intents and purposes, a declaration against further subserviency to church supremacy, unreasoning bigotry and obsolete ideas of the duty man owes to man. They would travel henceforth with the spirit of the times. The restraining hand of custom had been forced back. The shackles were broken. For better or for worse the new was in the ascendant.

Hope, as the secretary rose to announce the business and meetings for the week, touched him on the shoulder and indicated with a nod that he was to defer, for the time being, the customary reading of the notices. Perhaps more than any other person present the Chairman recognized in this the crucial moment. Despite all evidences of approval, he knew that a large faction still remained, adhering through conviction to opinions now discarded by a majority of the members. These men, despite, rather than because of, whose ideas the League had gained its prestige, were still entitled to consideration and a hearing. But, if they were to criticize his course, he wanted their position stated now. Otherwise he would consider their silence as a

mute sanction to the step he had taken. He glanced here and there about the hall as if encouraging some expression of their views. One — two — five minutes passed. The stillness became oppressive. Hope motioned to the secretary. Then, before the latter had completed rearranging the papers in his hands, from well back in the hall a voice was heard — a voice, not loud, but pitched in a penetrating key:

"I should like to ask, Mr. Hope, if a more definite explanation regarding this man and his offense cannot be given us. This action is unusual, unprecedented, I may say, sir, for our League to take — quite outside our established line of work. As a member of this organization since its birth, sir, I do not recall a similar attempt to meddle, if I may use the term, in a field of endeavor quite satisfactorily covered by the ordinary rescue missions. I assume, sir," he continued after a pause, "you will give us the name of the beneficiary for whom this liberal contribution has been taken. I would suggest, sir, further, your keeping a record of his progress. It should furnish a most interesting — I may add, instructive — report, especially, sir, to those of our members who are jealous of the use to which their gift is placed."

The speaker, toward whom all eyes were turned, sat down. He was a man of perhaps sixty-five years of age, tall and thin, and with shoulders stooped almost to the point of deformity. His scraggy hair and whiskers (the latter in evidence on chin alone) were more nearly white than gray. His nose was long and narrow; his eyes blue; his drawn face yellow as an old-time parchment. As the last words passed with peculiar emphasis from his lips, the semblance of a smile, cold and cynical, hovered for the merest fraction of time upon his countenance. To the majority of those in the audience he was known as Mr. Samuel Withers, a wealthy drug manufacturer, one of the organizers of the League, and for years the most rabid opponent of that element which advocated the wider opening of the membership door.

In the reply of Stanley Hope, who was now standing and who had listened without visible annoyance to the aged gentleman, there was nothing of ambiguity or evasion.

"Most decidedly not!" he said. "It is not our intention to place this man under any surveillance whatever. It is enough to know that for six months, at least, the Prison Association must do that. It *is* our purpose to permit neither his name nor his description to pass beyond the few who know it now. Our aim is to start him right. If he is to move among us it shall be on the same basis as that accorded any other new member. Otherwise," he concluded with a smile, "we would be handicapping instead of helping him."

Mr. Withers, about to address the Chairman again, gave way to one who had arisen directly at his left, and whose attitude he knew to be in sympathy with his own. He was a brother member, a physician of the old school, nearing the mark of three score and ten, but healthy, well-groomed and intellectual.

"I am inclined to agree with Mr. Withers," he remarked, having received a recognitory nod from Hope, "that if we are to establish a precedent of this character, logic would dictate our following the act to a point where its success or failure can be definitely ascertained. The proper use of funds contributed under circumstances such as we find existing today, makes it a solemn——"

"This is not a question of previous usage," interrupted the Chairman, with a show of impatience. "It's a matter of obedience to the teachings of Christ, and that means the extending of a helping hand whenever and wherever needed, without endeavoring to analyze the unfortunate's past before we extend him aid, or placing unnecessary restrictions on him and his future actions before we recognize him as our brother. The proper use of funds consists in utilizing them for the precise purpose for which they were contributed, which in this case means making such provision as will lessen to some extent the difficulties of this man's fight for rehabilitation, a fight that at its best will be hard enough. "Men,"—turning from the individual and addressing the entire audience—"before Mr. Patterson reads the announcements for the coming week, I want to thank you on behalf of this man, to whom, by your liberal response to my appeal, you have extended the glad hand of good fellowship. Remember, all of you, whether it's friendship or whether it's charity, the only kind that counts is the kind that helps and then forgets the deed."

CHAPTER II.

On Wednesday evening, ten days subsequent to the Sunday services which Stanley Hope, with mind alive to impending unpleasantness, had abruptly terminated, the League's reception room was filled with members awaiting call to the weekly Bible class meeting — a meeting second only in importance and attendance to that of Sabbath afternoon, and like it, usually presided over either by the chairman or secretary of the organization. A few minutes prior to the hour for assembling in the classroom, Hope, surrounded by a half dozen young fellows and vigorously defending the merits of a new apparatus installed in the gymnasium the day before, was interrupted by one of the League clerks who had hurriedly approached and touched him respectfully on the arm.

"Pardon me, Mr. Hope! A gentleman asked me to hand you this card; says no hurry; is in the reading room," and the busy employee, scurrying away, left his superior gazing with interest at a plain white card, on which was written in firm, bold letters, the name, "Anson Van Anholt."

"Here, Floyd!" he called after the receding figure of the clerk, "wait a minute!" Then observing the other had failed to hear him, he turned to one of the members of the group. "Patterson, will you open the meeting tonight? It's most important that I see this party. If I'm not back for the windup, have Cunningham read the special program for Sunday. He's got it ready." With which request, and indifferent to the reply, he started across the room, threaded his way through the still increasing crowd, then into and along the hall until he stood finally just outside the archway leading to the reading-room. A swift glance over the room and the familiar faces of members too deeply engrossed in their favorite paper or magazine to note his approach, and then his vision caught and rested on a figure seated close to and facing the great fireplace.

"And this," he murmured, "is the man! May God help me in being of service to him now!"

His clear, quick eyes were taking an inventory of the subject of his thoughts; an appraisement which time alone could verify or prove to be erroneous. The figure, evidently tall and well proportioned, was clothed in a suit of some plain and dark material. Over the left knee an overcoat was thrown; on this, held lightly by a gloved hand, rested the ever-conventional bowler hat. The body was leaning forward. In the flare from the burning logs his face, in profile, standing out against the dim background and reflecting thoughts chasing one another across a mind just now intensely serious, was readable and full of interest to Hope. It could not be called a handsome face. The nose was too large, the chin too weak, even if only a trifle so, to mark the perfect silhouette. The head, well shaped, was crowned by a luxuriant growth of black and wavy hair, which on closer inspection would have been found to be slightly streaked with gray. The forehead was of medium height; the mouth, as if to counteract the weakness of the chin, was firm and strong. The eyes, dark brown, mirrored their owner's varying moods; now flashing in the recollection of some past battle, won or lost; now soft and tender as gentle memories played upon the brain. They were eyes that spoke a language of their own — eyes such as men are taught to look for only where a clean, unsullied conscience reigns. Altogether an attractive face, clean shaven, intelligent, and possessed of many signs of force; one that told its story of success and failure, of hope and despair, as unerringly as it did of a temperament that could accept no result as final unless it bore the label of victory.

The man stirred. Hope, slipping through the door, advanced with outstretched hand. The other, as if by intuition, looked around and observing the newcomer moving toward him, stood erect. As palm met palm somebody opened the distant classroom door. Before a word was spoken both men smiled. The class was singing "Rescue the Perishing."

"Anholt, old chap, how are you? I'm glad to see you."

"Mr. Hope?" The voice, rich and melodious, was one of inquiry. "Believe me then," as the other nodded affirmatively, "the feeling is reciprocated. And — I'm doing splendidly, thanks to you."

"Glad to hear it. And the work?"

"Heavy enough to make one tired; interesting enough to cause one thought. Not a bad combination, though, with which to fight one's self-accusatory memories."

The library was becoming deserted for the classroom. Hope, who had pulled up a chair, proceeded to make himself comfortable in it; then waiting until Anholt had reseated himself, said:

"My boy, the recollection of an error, really regretted, makes a good lighthouse along the shore of life. The bigger it is, the stronger the light; the more of them, the better one should know the dangerous spots. The main thing is to keep in the open, remember the signals, and steer clear of the rocks. If you strike one, set up another warning and try again."

"Unless, perchance," remarked the other, "the ship that carries you is lost."

"A true sailor, my dear Anholt, is happy only when at sea. If he's shipwrecked he'll get afloat somehow, if he's got to ride the rough side of a log. The trouble is, few experiences of one man shine as a warning to the other fellow. But the most of us like to stand as advisers, usually on matters of which we know nothing, forgetting that a pilot, endeavoring to steer a stranger's craft without a personal knowledge of the coast, is pretty well in line for an accident himself."

"An insinuation," suggested Anholt, "which the ministry would probably resent."

"Not at all! The modern divine takes one point here and one point there on opposite sides of life's sea. This is the beginning, that the ending. He adheres to the Gospel of Christ as his guide; his course is charted by its rules; he veers neither to the right nor to the left, but keeps moving straight ahead in one well-defined and unwavering line. You're safe always in following him, regardless of his particular church."

"Which," said Anholt, "is the very thing the ordinary man don't do. We've adopted a code of ethics as elastic as our desires — a jumble of religion and——"

"I know," interrupted Hope, "I see it every day. In an ethical sense— if I can use the term—we've set a certain arbitrary limit, to which,

presumably, all men may safely venture. Keep just inside the line and you're honest, respectable; an inch beyond and you're done for. And the consequence is that every man having some particularly brilliant finale in view, instead of sailing straight ahead, across the calm waters of Christ's religion, edges along the borders of this ethical sea; the test of success too often being his ability to shave the danger points without running against the rocks, or in plainer words, the law. His prospective actions are always carefully studied out. His safety too often depends on a critical analysis of the intended move. Not, mind you, that he hesitates at a little stretching of the truth, but it's a question of passing the perilous point. Anholt, believe me, any end that can be accomplished only by skirting the shores of decency and social morality as we know them today, isn't worthy of achievement; and, whenever you've got to examine each contemplated act and so adjust it that it comes merely within the requirements of the law, then you're wrong. The genuine. straight-from-the-shoulder Christian never is obliged to use the microscope that way. He knows but one code — a moral one — and follows that instinctively. He may strike an unknown reef, now and then, but he marks it and turns his vessel's prow towards the safer waters again. My boy, it's impossible to qualify the absolute. It's impossible to add a comparative or superlative to the good old name of common honesty."

When Hope ceased speaking, Anholt continued staring at the flickering flames. For full five minutes neither spoke. Then when the conversation was resumed it changed to other topics. The League's chairman learned much of Anholt's life, his family, his aims and struggles. He, in return, related something of the history of the League and of his own connection with it. Later, they made a round of the building, visiting the gymnasium, dormitory, auditorium, dining-room and class-rooms, all possessing some point or points of interest. In the enthusiasm of his host Anholt seemed to breathe new life. To him, as to all others with whom he came in contact, Hope proved to be an inspiration. In his companionship men left despondency and vain regrets behind, and walked along the avenue of hopefulness and peace. At last the opening of doors and the hum of voices reached their ears. The Bible class was

out. The two men arose and started, arm in arm, toward the hall. As they stepped into it Anholt, pausing, laid his hand on the shoulder of his new-found friend and said:

"Mr. Hope, in coming here tonight I expected to meet a generous, God-fearing, charitable man. But, let me say it, I expected him to catechize, pray over, and preach to me. To such a man, duty and obligation would have compelled me to make good. Instead, I met a *man,* one who knows and understands. Your hand, extended in the spirit of good-fellowship; your acceptance of me on trust, as a co-worker; your magnanimity in leaving unsaid many possibly pertinent things, has made me a recruit in the cause; a trifle raw, perhaps, and needing no small amount of discipline, but no deserter, you may depend on that."

"Bully for you!" was the hearty response. "You're on the roll call, marked for promotion. Now to go out and get acquainted with the regulars."

To Anholt the vision of weeks past was now an existent fact. He was again among men; his mental (he hesitated to call them his social) equals. Warm hand clasps; cheery welcomes from members whose clean-cut features and healthy skins bore testimony to the kind of lives they led. Over in one corner a piano was being played by some redoubtable volunteer. Above him, standing on a chair, was Hope, leading the crowd around him in a lusty chorus. No snobbery, no restraint, nothing but an atmosphere of geniality acting as a tonic to the mind and inducing pure, exalted thoughts. To this newest member an impulse came to mingle with the joyous throng and lend strong voice to the well-remembered songs; to join this band of royal fellows and assert his equality by doing as they did. Reason urged him on; told him it was not hypocrisy; assured him that none save three or four knew aught of what his past had been; advised him to bury his sorrow and to permit the best that was in him to shine forth there. Then something else spoke — something that you or I, perhaps, will never understand; something that comes alone to those who have been as Anholt was; something that calls to mind at times inopportune an awful, hideous truth. This voice was heard and heeded by the man. A start, a shake of the

head, the muttered words, "Too soon!" and the impulse to act had passed. Memory had been implacable. As he stood thus, someone touched him on the arm. He glanced up to find an elderly gentleman addressing him in a piping, high-pitched voice:

"Mr. Van Anholt, I believe, sir?"

"Anholt, sir. Van is my middle—a family name. And yours?"

"Withers—Samuel Withers, sir. I am proud to have been one of the founders of this League."

"And right good cause for self-congratulations," replied Anholt. "I can personally vouch for the helpful influence of your organization."

"Ah! indeed, sir. We have endeavored to work along legitimate lines. We have held it our duty to only help those who first prove themselves deserving. After they do that we——"

"How," asked Anholt, "do you determine their qualifications? I should assume the granting of opportunity to prove deserving worth by extending aid at once, where needed, would be more in keeping with the true Christian spirit. Help him first, then permit his actions to show the kind of man he is. *That* appeals to me as being charity worth one's while."

"I term that, sir, a game of chance. The kind that takes a drunkard, or a tramp, or a *convict,* and grants him pecuniary aid on the gamble that he may turn out later to be all right. That, sir, is the type of charity that gets bitten nine times out of ten. I don't believe in it, sir. Let these characters make men of themselves first——"

"By which time," again interrupted the other, "they are beyond need of your assistance."

"Not so, sir! Men always require aid. Take our young men here. We're helping them day by day to better lives. Yet not one was lifted from the gutter. No man, sir, with a frayed record has ever joined us. If by any chance one ever does, and he is detected, we'll expel him instantly, if I can have my say."

Anholt, with mind intensely alert, correctly interpreted the threat conveyed in the older man's words. He answered in a voice perfectly even, his countenance covered meanwhile with a frank, engaging smile:

"My dear Mr. Withers, your idea is most original and doubtless to some attractive. You do not pose as an uplifter of men — I mean as it lifts them from sin to righteous lives. That work you delegate to individuals and organizations cast in coarser moulds. But, taking those who meet your rigid moral requirements, your purpose is to keep them right, in line with the old maxim about the ounce of prevention. As a society endeavoring to rescue men once fallen, you would risk contamination by moral lepers. As a League whose duties are confined chiefly to keeping the presumably crystalline conscience of your members, and acting as overlord to characters whose shadows have failed of detection, your position is unique. True, Christ preached a different doctrine, but that was before the intellectual dawn. With——"

"What mean you, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Withers, excitedly.

"With members," continued Anholt, "whose reputations are gilt-edged and who keep them so, your position would appear to be impregnable. But suppose one or more of them should, by reason of some unforseen accident, be found out. 'Aye, there's the rub.' The moral lapse of a single member — a discovered one, I mean — and you're disqualified. But should ninety-nine per cent. of the Band of Hope's reclaimed drop back to sin, the stock of that energetic little army remains at par, and the praise of men and angels testify to their success. Why? Because the hundredth man was saved. Frankly, my dear Mr. Withers, none but a knave or a fool could endorse your policy. I shall be surprised and disappointed if you prove to be anything but the exception in this League."

With a half snarl the old man turned. "There has been one exception, sir, to the policy of this organization, which I propose shall prove the value of the rule." Then observing Stanley Hope appearing, he edged away and became lost in the crowd.

"Funeral oration or an everyday sermon?" asked Hope, nodding after the disappearing man.

"Merely prophesy," replied Anholt, adding, "One of your leaders, I understand."

"Pessimism, my boy, can't lead here any more, and Withers can find a cloud in the clearest sky that ever sheltered this good old earth. Not a bad lot, though, with all his 'sirs,' if you tread softly enough."

"I guess I've touched the corn alright," thought the other as they started toward the cloak room, preparatory to leaving for the night.

* * * *

The hall bedroom still retains the same characteristics that have made it an institution in our city life for the last third of a century or more. It answers a demand that nothing else can fill. Its situation in the house, its furnishings, its very atmosphere, remains the same as in days of yore. It is a companion of necessity; the one essential and objective point in the mind of every urbanist when fortune frowns. The butt of humor, sarcasm and ridicule, it has survived their united attacks. Under its solitary light inspirations have been born helping to revolutionize the world. Its single bed has given birth to innumerable bright-hued dreams — dreams turned to actual, tangible realities by energy and toil. As a potent factor in the rise of man it has played no insignificant part. It retains an undisputed corner in the memories of many of our country's greatest men. Write a history of it and you will have furnished the world with a comprehensive treatise on success. In the experiences of the characters enriching its pages you will have provided humanity with hope and inspiration for all time. Notable among those sections of New York City where this type of bedroom still predominates is that district lying north of Twenty-third street and immediately adjacent to Lexington avenue. The avenue itself has its full quota of these very necessary and ever-rentable rooms. It was toward this neighborhood that Anholt, after leaving Stanley Hope, had directed his steps. Noting neither the starry brightness of the sky nor the biting cold causing the snow to crunch beneath his feet, he hastened forward, his mind a prey to confusing thoughts. Stirred by conflicting emotions his appreciation of Hope's whole-hearted assistance surrendered to grave forebodings as the menacing words of Samuel Withers recurred time and again to him.

"That man Withers," he muttered as he strode along, "was talking for a purpose tonight. He was actuated not so much by pessimism as by some inexplicable animosity aimed at me. Strange, too, for he wasn't

mentioned by Mr. Hope as one of the four who understood my position. If he's not altogether satisfied he's certainly suspicious enough of me, and that's anything but a comforting thought. Well, anyhow," giving his head a toss, "time, if nothing else, will tell!"

On across Twenty-seventh street; north a short distance on Lexington; up a high front stoop; a door unlocked; then another climb of two longer flights of steps and the man was home. Lighting the only gas jet in the room, he hung up overcoat and hat, slowly surveyed the cheerless walls, made himself as nearly comfortable as was possible considering the dilapidated condition of the solitary chair, and undertook to think.

"Anholt, old man" (so his mind ran), "you're in for a battle royal, that's plain. It isn't old man Withers, and it isn't society that you've got to look to for the hardest tussle. You've got to fight yourself, and on the lines Mr. Hope has laid down. Honesty without qualification. A rattling good battle cry, that! One that ought to win in spite of Hell!"

He glanced toward the wall; at a picture fastened there by cord and pin; the photograph of a woman's face — a face telling of infinite love, of purity, of beauty and of strength. His gaze rested, lingered fondly upon this likeness of a much-beloved wife. His eyes, flashing a moment since with the fire of enthusiasm and anticipated fight, grew soft and gentle as the fall of night. Ineffable tenderness was reflected in his face. Reaching forward he took the picture in his hands, pressed it reverently to his lips; then, holding it at arm's length, spoke as if, instead of to the image, it was to his wife in flesh.

"My beloved Dorothy, a free man is speaking to you now. Once, each night, in all the dark and dreary past I've held you, dearest, as I'm doing now. It was the sacred hour with me; the one God-given rest from thoughts of things both sad and gross. Then, as now, I recalled the sweet-faced, blushing bride, who placed her hand in mine with measureless trust and confidence, and gave into my keeping all that she possessed; her heart and love and life. Oh! sweetheart. Oh! noble, generous, forgiving little girl. Still trusting, still believing, still loving! You are my heart's one great idol. Even above the Divine Creator, I fear I worship you at times. If I could insure your earthly

happiness; if I could purchase your eternal joy by forfeiting the salvation of my soul, the price would still, indeed, be small. And yet you make it so easy for me to bring you peace; you ask so little, darling. Not promises. Not the affiliation with this or that particular church. Just the doing unto others as I would have them do to me. Only the doing of the little things, as Christ would have them done. My love, you are wiser than the prophets. You are stronger in your womanly purity and trust than the loudest trumpeters heralding the gospel of our Lord. Precious, generous wife of mine, by your own life you have raised—can keep me from the depths. Help me, beloved; stay by me while I pray."

The light was lowered. Anholt in his weakness was in communion with his God.

CHAPTER III.

In the real estate offices of Carter & Dixon, who had given him employment, Anholt had been installed originally as a stenographer. The business of the firm, confined exclusively to city realty, was extensive, requiring a large clerical force to handle its details, and the ability of the new typist, too obvious to escape the notice of the shrewd and discerning Dixon, had resulted in the creation of an office hitherto unknown in the history of the firm. As office manager, in the two months elapsing since his service began, he had instituted a campaign of systematization in the routine work facilitating the keeping of records and accounts. He had reduced the number of clerks without impairing the effectiveness of the force. He had caused the books to be balanced daily; insisted on the employees quitting work, with clean sheets, as promptly as they were required to begin it; abolished night tasks, saving thereby the allowances for supper money and remuneration for extra hours of indifferent service, and demonstrated the possibility of securing a monthly trial balance without the necessity of an all-night struggle heretofore considered inevitable. He had taught the men to make each minute count, and had emphasized the truth that work done properly step by step, required no doing over at the end. He had justified the expectations of his employers and the confidence of Stanley Hope.

Such was his record of the daytime. In what manner he utilized the hours belonging to himself, he alone could tell. To be sure, he was to be found on three evenings of each week, with but few exceptions, secluded in his room; studying, reading, writing. The early hours of the fourth and fifth nights he spent, usually, at the League, to all appearances interested in the work, lending a hand where opportunity presented, extending his acquaintanceship among the members, and, in general, equipping himself for the satisfactory performance of whatever duties might be later delegated to him. But of the hours thenceforward until after midnight and for all the hours until past that

time on the two remaining nights, no explanation as to the way in which he passed them was available.

With this brief résumé of the man's progress we are carried forward some seven weeks to midnight on the first of March. It was a night typical of this unreasoning month. A drizzly rain, chilling and penetrating, left the streets deserted by all save those whom necessity drove abroad. Grand street, the Lower East Side's Broadway, to which our attention is directed now, displayed little more of life than did those canyons further south where the face of man is seldom seen from sunset until dawn.

A closely muffled figure was moving eastward, along the south side of this particular thoroughfare. He was walking slowly, hesitatingly, in sharp contrast to the rapid strides with which the few who ventured out passed by. On the north side of the street, perhaps ten feet further back another figure, silent as a spectre, advanced, receded or stood motionless, in harmony with the other's uncertain, wavering course. Suddenly the one in front stopped, turned, and as if impelled by a decision hastily made, started rapidly to retrace his steps. His shadow paused for an instant, evidently surprised at the unexpected move, then darted forward, crossed the street and shouted in no uncertain tones:

"Here, you crook! I want you."

The one thus commanded drew himself up with a start, looked quickly around, then moved hurriedly on again.

The pursuer neared him. "You hear me talkin', Anholt! I said stop! That goes, see!"

"Yes, I'm Anholt," answered the other, halting for the second time. "What of it? You say you want me, why?"

"Well, you know me, don't you?" The words spoken in a voice unpleasantly rough and coarse, induced Anholt to examine him closely. A burly form hidden in the warm depths of a heavy ulster coat; a sensual face, embellished by a thick and black moustache. The countenance, perhaps one day called handsome, now bore witness to an ignorant, self-centered mind behind. Yes, Anholt knew and in a measure feared the man. He answered him now, in a low, calm voice.

"Yes, Essingham, I know you. What do you want?"

"You're workin' at Carter & Dixon's, ain't you? One of the main squeezes, eh? What're you gettin' a week?"

Anholt hesitated. Self control and prudence were hardly dominant traits of his mental makeup. His lips, framing an angry retort, were checked in time by reason. He knew, too well by far, what peculiar powers are vested in the plain clothes members of the Metropolitan Detective Bureau. Strange acts, unauthorized by any legal or departmental written code find sanction at Headquarters, when committed under cover of the shield. Good men, there are in plenty there, who wear this emblem of the law; men of integrity, culture and ability. But good or bad, for all alike, the one unwritten motto stands: "Our men can do no wrong." Anholt, once the victim of this unacknowledged, but existent rule, had grasped in time the full measure of his danger. Essingham was detailed from the Central Office. Therefore, he must shape his replies accordingly.

"Fifteen dollars."

"What're you givin' me; a jolly or the goods?"

"Straight goods, Essingham."

"Well, it's five plunks too much You know me and I want mine, see? I ain't askin' what your game is around here tonight, so long's you come down with the stuff. Here's the card what tells you where to send the little V. I want it there prompt on pay day. Are you next?"

The rain started afresh. The two stepped into a deserted hallway leading to the tenement above.

"Essingham, will you listen to me for a minute?" Anholt paused as much in effort to control himself, as in waiting for reply. No signal or word came from the detective. He continued then, nothwithstanding the lack of encouragement. "Less than a year and a-half ago I was charged by you with the commission of a minor offense. The fact that I was guilty doesn't matter now. You knew your case against me was weak and that in all probability I could have successfully defended myself. You traced my record down and ascertained that when little

more than a boy I had been punished for a crime. That was all you found against me, but it was enough. In the eyes of society it would make me guilty of anything you saw fit to charge me with. I told you rather than have my friends become conversant with my plight through a contest in the courts, I would plead guilty. You promised to use such influence as you possessed to secure me clemency. Instead of that you had every unsolved case of a similar nature on the Headquarter's books, charged up against me. I was the goat, and having plead guilty to the one was made to wash the slate of a dozen others. You and the Department received the credit. Don't —."

"Aw, stow that bunc, will you!" interrupted the officer. "Do I get that money or not?"

"Essingham, with a man trying to make good on fifteen dollars a week, it's pretty hard to —."

The other snorted. "It is to laugh! You to make good! Why you stiff, I've spotted you for the last hour. Ever since you left the Bowery and Housten. I've been next to every move you've made. If you hadn't changed your mind so quick you'd been took in on somethin' more'n suspicion."

Anholt started. "You don't mean —."

"Yes, I mean just that!" catching his victim by the coat lapel. "Wise gazoo, you are, nit! Bellyachin' fer a lousy fiver with ten still left to play your game. I'd oughter made it seven. That's what it'll cost you now or you're comin' along. Talk up!" He pulled suggestively on Anholt's coat. The latter was becoming imbued with the suspicion that Essingham was more intent on frightening him into meeting his demands than he was desirous of making an arrest on some altogether unsupportable charge. Yet he knew that tribute levied under conditions such as these had long been recognized as a perquisite of the officer who could wield the largest club over the selected victim's head. In view of this he deemed it wise to make some concession for the time, at least; considering this the lesser of the two evils he was called upon to face.

"To give you seven, or even five dollars," he explained, "out of the fifteen is impossible. I am, however, prepared to pay you something as a matter of policy, but if you will consider that aside from my actual and necessary living expenses, I am obliged to forward at least five dollars weekly to Mrs. Anholt —."

Essingham, with a loud guffaw that startled some lone passer by and caused him to look around, backed against the wall.

"Five plunks for the madam! Well for a confidin' guy that thinks a pretty little —."

Like a flash all thought of compromise, all regard for reason was dismissed by the man at whose wife the insult was aimed. With hands clenched until the nails cut in the flesh, and eyes gleaming with the light of an uncontrollable passion, his voice rang out like pistol shots.

"Stop, you blackguard! Stop! You talk to me of crooks! *You*— you damnable, blackmailing cur! You leech! You feeder at prostitution's trough! you sleek scoundrel, flourishing because shorn virtue needs must hand you its polluted gold; exacter of blood money from every unfortunate that walks the streets! By God! I'll teach you a lesson that'll ——." But the officer, springing forward pulled him suddenly, violently toward the door.

"That'll be about all for a while," he exclaimed, cooly enough. "You're going up to the Central Office. Come on!" With the words he gave another quick and vicious jerk.

It was a moment ripe for tragedy; a crisis fraught with possibilities of evil deeds. What the outcome might have been, had they remained uninterrupted, the one, calloused by his life and vocation, never paused to think. The other, dared not. Before the latter could reply or act, from somewhere in the shadow came a voice, deep and resonant.

"I would suggest, friend Essingham, a slight modification of your plans. It would be a wise action, very."

Essingham started, loosened his grip on his intended prisoner's arm, and gazed at a towering, bulky form that had arisen in the shadows apparently from nowhere. A figure the dim light showed to be attired in the dress of the high church clergy and who, singularly enough,

considering the night, wore neither overcoat nor gloves. Anholt with a feeling of intense relief stood motionless, awaiting developments. The detective, at last, had recognized the intruder.

"Storey, by God!" he cried. "What the 'ells the reason I can't pinch a crook anymore without you buttin' in? This man's wanted at Headquarters and he's goin' there."

In genial tones the rotund personage spoke again. "My dear Essingham, you have, inadvertently, I am sure, reversed the position of knave and honest man. You're a poor diagnostician. Now I should say the rascal had threatened to arrest the *man*. *Man*, Essingham! can you understand what that word means?" Now there was a change in tone and manner, that brooked neither refusal nor reply. "I overheard the demand you made on this *man*, and I heard, also, his reply to you. All he said of you is true. *You* know it, and you know *I* know it. I want you to leave him alone hereafter, understand? You broke faith with me and you've lied to me. I don't want any words further with you now, and I don't want any apology for the ones you've used to me. Another case like this and you'll go broke; not back to patrol duty. Now go!"

"I tell you," protested the officer, "this fellow——"

"Go!" thundered the giant. Essingham started, hesitated for an instant, and then, smothering a string of oaths, stepped out into the dismal street. The two men followed.

"Our friend, Mr. Anholt," remarked he whom the detective had addressed as Storey, "appears disposed to serve us both an evil turn. I believe tonight, though, I would be justified in ascribing my timely happening on the scene to the direct intervention of a Divine Providence."

"It was Providential, certainly," replied Anholt, adding, "As Essingham repeated your name, I need scarcely say that the Reverend Melville Storey requires no introduction to me. In view of the conversation which you overheard, I should assume that any attempts to tell you who I am, would be equally superfluous. It would resolve itself, probably into an attempt at self justification."

"Which, my dear sir, is quite unnecessary. In my eyes you were justified before I ever heard your voice. Fully, I should say, ten days ago. Ah!" as they turned the corner. "Here we are—permit me. What? Oh, Bob! I left him sound asleep. It would be unwise to disturb him. I'll explain later."

A handsome motor car, of limousine type, hugged the sidewalk. The reverend gentleman, who had already reached it, opened the door and motioned his companion to enter. A single word of instruction to the half chilled driver; the door closed, and the car sped toward the north along the almost forsaken Bowery. The minister, after enveloping himself in a monster overcoat, which for some inexplicable reason he had discarded before leaving the car, comfortably ensconced himself in the upholstery at Anholt's left, and broke the silence.

"Your consuming curiosity, my friend, shall soon be satisfied. Pray accept and join me first in this really fine cigar. One of the few luxuries vouchsafed to wearers of the cloth by an indulgent society."

"Together," supplemented Anholt, "with automobiles of foreign make, since we haven't learned to appreciate them here as yet, and high salaried drivers, probably from Paris——."

"My dear Anholt, anything that contributes to the cause of righteousness is a necessity, always; never a luxury. I impress an automobile into service, become an agent of Divine mercy to three unfortunates instead of to the one I might possibly reach through our antiquated transportation system, and there you are. The cost of the car is nothing; the good it does, everything. Now then," he continued, "out with your questions! and—call me Storey when you talk." The big form settled back again; the cigar was lighted and Anholt had the opportunity he had so impatiently craved.

"Mind reader as well as philanthropist," he said. "Clearly your reputation for versatility is justified. Now that you've very properly reproved me for a somewhat impertinent remark, I should like to ask the circumstances under which, ten days ago, I became absolved of serious derelictions in your mind. Such a voluntary expression, on your part, of faith in me, would, at any time be as unexpected as it

would be agreeable. But, unless I am incorrect, our acquaintanceship and your personal knowledge of me have covered a total period of something less than fifteen minutes. Is this faculty for determining and apparently irrevocably so, in your mind, the moral status of a man ten days before you ever saw or heard of him another manifestation of your accredited genius, or is there a simple, disillusionizing explanation after all? Anyway, let's have it."

"My friend," answered Storey, after a series of long puffs on his cigar, "I've simply been poaching on your preserves, that's all." More puffs followed.

"Your explanation," observed Anholt, "is succinct, but a trifle hazy. Suppose you try again."

"I will," and the minister leaned forward again. "As you are aware the most marvelous and deceptive performances of the masters of legerdemain become ridiculously simple when explained. Ditto here. You've been trying your hand out for the past six weeks in a personally conducted, party of one, campaign of good work along somewhat original lines. As you've been doing this in a locality in which I am personally interested (so much so that one of your charges turned informer on you), I've been endeavoring to catch you in the act. That explains my fortunate advent at the crucial moment tonight. The lad told me you would be there and I waited until after midnight——"

"Yes," offered Anholt. "I was delayed; met a pretty hard case on the way down from the League; *sans* money, *sans* food, *sans* work and just off the Island. Wet and shivering like——"

"I know," said the other. "You bought him a drink first, then something to eat, and finally landed him in a bed; all out of your munificent salary. Probably handed him a shilling or two for breakfast. If it wasn't for the drink first and the bread and cheese you'll eat tomorrow as a compromise with your pocket-book you would deserve the Master's blessing."

"The drink," replied Anholt, "he needed more than I did the Martini I took with him. And, since you've kindly filled in the sequence of events to your own satisfaction, I'll merely add, that I became confused in

the darkness as to Bob's exact location, and had just corrected myself when our mutual friend stepped up."

"And when," added Storey, "I gave you up and started home."

Both remained silent for a time. Then Anholt, rubbing the moisture from the door glass, noticed a Twenty-third street cross-town car speeding by. Brought to a realization of the near termination of his ride and for the first time recalling the fact that Storey had made no inquiry as to his place of abode, he was about to thank him for his unexpected intervention and request permission to alight, intending to cover the short remaining distance to his room on foot. He was not without hope that the minister would indicate an inclination to renew the acquaintance formed under conditions so unusual. Before he could speak, his companion, as if interpreting his thoughts, turned his eyes upon him.

"Mr. Anholt," he said, "I want you to put up with me for the balance of the night. You will be conferring a real favor on me and I think I may safely promise you an interesting hour before you retire. Yes? Good," and he sank back among the cushions. Acceptance on Anholt's part of an invitation framed in such words and under the circumstances was inevitable, not alone because of his growing desire to further relations evidently agreeable to his prospective host, but because of his wish to correct, if opportunity presented, whatever erroneous impressions the other may have formed regarding him.

During the balance of the ride he surrendered himself to his thoughts —thoughts in which the man at his side occupied a central and controlling place. His knowledge of the minister, derived both from verbal and newspaper accounts, served to increase rather than to satisfy his curiosity. That he exerted a powerful influence in certain quarters was unquestionable. Anholt, himself, but a short time since had received confirmatory evidence of this. Whence this influence was derived was an enigma as yet unsolved by the public, although more than one enterprising metropolitan daily had hazarded a shrewd, if rather remarkable guess. He was a free lance in the theological field. Of American parentage and a graduate of Oxford, he had early been ordained as a clergyman in the Church of England. Big of heart as he

was of body, his sympathies rapidly became enlisted in the cause of the submerged third. Becoming less the preacher and more the practical worker, the limitations imposed upon him by a rigid adherence to Church precedent became irksome, and he surrendered his charge to one less imaginative and more amenable to discipline. He then undertook to work along his own, if somewhat unorthodox lines. Soho and Whitechapel alike, soon learned to know and respect this genial, good-natured and kindly person, still clothed in the conventional vestments of the church; who talked Scripture little; who adopted the Golden Rule as a concentration of the best to be found in all religions, and put it in practice in his own original way. Deprecating a charity that operates at long range he mixed with the people he aimed to serve; ate with them, and when circumstances demanded slept among them. As a teller of anecdotes he would bring the sunshine of laughter to many a discouraged soul. In his sympathetic and confidence-inspiring presence, the grave, to the mourners gathered round, seemed less an awful, grewsome thing. Eliminating all "better than thou" mannerisms in his labor of love, he met all men as equals, assisting by word, money or influence, as conditions called. With his growing familiarity and understanding of the under world, his interpretation of man's religious obligations became more liberal. Already *persona non grata* to many of the high church dignitaries, he became likewise a thorn in the side of more than one well intentioned organization whose proficiency in prayer and speech was equalled only by its disinclination to believe the gratification of the physical man an essential preliminary to his spiritual rehabilitation. Suddenly, three years before the time of which we write, he left England and returned to the land and city of his birth; resuming there the work so successfully carried on in London. Various reasons were assigned by as many different persons for the unexpected action. One argued that it was the direct result of his conflict with the church; another hinted at an unsatisfactory termination of a love affair; still another, hopeful that his absence would be but a temporary one, suggested the possibility of a relative's death requiring his presence in America to assist in settling up the estate.

Whatever the cause, the regret expressed over his departure gave ample proof, both of the good he had wrought and the affection in which he was held. To New York City the gain was no less than was London's loss. The minister's keen observation and knowledge of men enabled him to readily adjust himself to the changed surroundings. Humanity, much as it may differ in prosperity, resolves itself in poverty, back into its orignal self. To be natural is to be poor. With each successive smile of fortune another layer of veneer, appropriate to the requirements of the particular social set entered by reason of the added wealth, is hastily smeared on. Storey, having (so far as his labors were concerned) cast his lot among those whom penury compelled to appear precisely what they were, soon became recognized as their ablest and most persistent champion. A despiser of hypocrisy, he was the last to hide any possible vices of his own. Writing on the subject nearest his heart, his opinions were accepted by the city press as unprejudiced and worthy of consideration and comment. Wherever he spoke (and his services were in general demand), he secured the respect and attention of his hearers, even though they could not always concur in his deductions based on the experience he had had. His sincerity was unquestioned. Thus it was that this physical giant; this aggressive, open-hearted, tender messager of a compassionate Christ; mixing indiscriminately with people of all kinds and all classes, had reached, despite his disregard for conventionality and criticism, a place unique on the stage of metropolitan life.

Such was the Rev. Melville E. Storey, at whose rather pretentious residence in West Fifty-seventh street the car now stopped. The minister, with a "Here we are," opened the door. Both men stepped out and with a "Good night" to the driver, started arm in arm toward the stoop. A moment later and the door, opened by an impassive faced butler, admitted them to the cheery warmth and brightness of the reception hall.

"Ah! my dear Anholt," exclaimed the host, rubbing his hands with vigor, "even a bachelor's home is worth the keeping on such a night as this." Then turning to the butler, who had disposed of coats and hats; "Parker, has Mr. Bishop called?"

"Yes, sir; he's in the library awaiting you now, sir."

"Good! Now Mr. Anholt, for one of the most comfortable chairs and one of the best fellows this side of the river Styx. Yes," observing and answering his guest's expressive look; "I expected him. It's all in the plot. Parker," as they began ascending the stairs, "some brandy and soda at once—and some sandwiches."

"Very well, sir."

The minister again addressed Anholt. "'Having acknowledged to a Martini, I may I trust, safely offer you the antidote?"

"If," came the answer, "it's efficacy is guaranteed by my host's partaking as well, certainly."

They were entering the library; a room of goodly size; well lighted, well stocked and well furnished. The dominant idea in its fitting up had undoubtedly been the combination of comfort with convenience. To this was added a simple, quiet elegance, speaking as clearly as words of the man who occupied it. In truth, one knowing Storey, might easily have guessed the room. Back from the fireplace, and directly under a massive chandelier shedding its soft rays over the crowded shelves of books, sat a slender, black-haired, black-eyed and smoothly shaven man; a figure immaculately attired in the conventional evening dress. Through reading, the book had fallen to the floor. One leg was hanging over the chair's arm; his hands were clasped; his entire attitude one of repose. Indeed, but for the eyes that turned indifferently toward the new comers, one might have assumed him to be asleep. He was aware of their presence, unquestionably, yet neither by word nor gesture did he indicate interest in, much less acquaintance with, either of the men who had approached and now stood before him. Nor, so far as Anholt could observe, was his attitude either surprising or annoying to Storey. In fact, the latter looked down upon the apathetic individual with a smile half quizzical, half indulgent; then, turning to his companion, said:

"Friend Anholt, before you sits one of the jolliest, and permit me to add, one of the laziest dogs that ever went unmuzzled. You can trust him unreservedly and borrow from him without compunction. He is

faithful, affectionate and gentle. He sleeps with one eye open and had taken stock of you before you were half across the room. When you want him, call him Bishop, although some wiseacre, in token of his disposition and tendency to always see the meat and never the bone it covers, has prefixed this with 'Sunrise.' Having now stroked his hair in the right direction, perhaps our friend will bark."

In answer, he to whom Storey had given the name of Bishop arose; the slenderness and delicacy of his figure contrasting strangely with the athletic form of Anholt and the massive size of the minister. The face, regular as a woman's; the hands, white and telling of the manicure; the grace with which he moved, all suggested the effeminate; a feeling strengthened by the sweet and languid voice with which the man (certainly not over thirty years of age), ignoring the unconventional wording of the introduction, now spoke.

"Mr. Anholt, this *is* a pleasure." His hand pressed the other's in a grip surprisingly firm and strong. As if in soliloquy he continued: "Preacher, knave, and now we have the honest man! An ideal combination, I should say, for a congenial social group. My dear Storey," addressing the latter, "you were born thirty centuries too late. As chief of Sodom and Gomorrah's secret service bureau you would have found those much discussed and needed incorruptible citizens."

"Bishop," replied their host, pulling up chairs for Anholt and himself, "even in New York, such a find is not impossible. We're all only relatively honest anyhow; as our acts compare with those of other men, so do we find our reputations as honorable men defined. Honesty in its literal and strictest sense can be accredited to nobody."

"Ergo," said Bishop, "all men are honest, except the poor devil at the tail end of the procession who has nobody lower than he is to make comparison with. What gammon!" and he resumed his former position in the chair.

"That's ground for argument," returned Storey. "What do you say, friend?" looking at Anholt.

"Like Mr. Bishop," came the answer; "I take issue with you. You would measure a man's integrity *solely* by the manner in which the

public looks upon his acts. You would make character and reputation synonymous terms. Pardon me, but I am obliged by reason of my own experience with you, to brand your words as inconsistent with your acts."

"You contend then," inquired the minister, "that reputation is no index to character?"

Anholt hesitated before replying. "Except in youth, no," he said finally. "To me a regrettable condition of maturity as compared with one's boyhood days, is that the building of an enviable reputation is no criterion of the man's true character. In early youth the one reflects, to an almost certain degree, the other. The necessity as well as the ability to build on a false moral foundation is latent; the distance from the cradle too short for time to cast the mantle of forgetfulness over acts that make or mar for one's success."

Storey smiled. "I grant you," he responded, "a gilt edged reputation may cover countless moral lapses. But a spotless character minus a clean reputation is an anomaly inconceivable."

"And," ventured Bishop, "your spotless character in man where honesty in its literal sense doesn't exist is another anomaly. This differentiation between the this and the thus is beyond me. Anholt, I yield the floor. My head splits."

"What I'm driving at," said Anholt, willing to continue the subject; "is that character, the essential product of man's innate conception of what is right or wrong, is not affected by his action. Reputation is. My character is my own; it is *me*. My reputation belongs to the public, subject always for its preservation to the demands and whims of a capricious society. With a motive satisfactory to my conscience I may commit an act unpardonable in the sight of the community at large. My reputation is gone. My character—providing in my own mind the action was justified—lives."

"Yet reputations," insisted Storey, "appear easily obtained and as easily preserved."

"On the contrary," replied Anholt, "the sequence of honorable actions must remain unbroken if the reputation lives. In its building

man becomes the acrobat crossing life's span on a narrow treacherous way. Like Blondin, o'er Niagara, each step must be precise and right; a single slip and you've undone the work of years. Patience, labor, trials and record go for naught; the end is absolute and sure."

From the calm, half indifferent manner with which the man had first spoken he was passing to one of deep earnestness. The eyes, the face, the vibrations of the voice told of one speaking from the heart; one who had known, and seen, and felt. Storey was experiencing a feeling of intense satisfaction. He had struck the proper key. He had found the other out. Even as he thought the voice of his guest changed again. In it lay something of defiance; something of sarcasm. Now the tone was one reminiscent of a bitter cup; of a rebellion against conditions that had made his life at times a hell. "Singular, isn't it," he continued, "that one discovered wrong annuls the social rights consistent Christian living may have earned? Strange, truly, to appraise man's moral status by one slight error made, and that preceded by a life of honesty, and kindly deeds, and all that gave to others happiness! Funny, that a professedly Christian world should take one fault or failure and against a past consecrated to righteousness, make it tip the scales! Marvelous doctrine, that preaches the great, forgiving Christ; in prayer admits the proneness of the human mind to err, and then insults the memory of the Savior—of him who, as his dying act could grant with faltering voice his pardon to a thief, and in promising him a seat at his side, make him his social equal in Paradise! And thus we see, this self-righteous, hypocritical thing we dignify as Christian Society, placing the ban of moral leprosy on all who may perchance, for an instant slip and fall. And the Devil looks and laughs!"

For a moment after Anholt ceased speaking, the three remained silent. Then Bishop, with his finger flecking an imaginary speck from his sleeve, observed audibly. "The plot thickens. Knave I am, but as between the honest man and preacher, my vision fails." He leaned forward unexpectedly, extended his hand to his fellow guest and uttered the single word, "Shake." The grasp; the meeting of the eyes,

as if each read the other's soul, was over. A compact inviolable and permanent as life was sealed. Each knew that the other understood.

Storey, apparently oblivious to the incident, now remarked: "Mr. Anholt, I understand your attitude and appreciate your argument. I will not deny that it contains a large measure of truth. The situation is one that presents a grave question to earnest and intelligent church and religious workers. At times I almost despair of a satisfactory solution. And permit me to say here, that my strongest hope for bringing about a partial remedy lies in my association with yourself and our friend here——."

"As a horrible example under the scalpel of the moral vivisectionist—hardly, my dear philanthropist!" interrupted Bishop, whose words were followed by the chimes of an antique clock calling attention to the early morning hour.

"If Bishop can restrain his tendency to break in on what I am about to say," said Storey, "for not more than five minutes, "I'll explain the purpose of our meeting here tonight. Then we can retire to rest. Ah! the sandwiches! Gentlemen, jump in—and Parker, brandy and soda for Mr. Anholt. For myself, just a drop—Mr. Bishop does not indulge. Thanks! Now," turning to Anholt, "while our friend's mouth is stuffed, I'll proceed. Our friend, Bishop, here—S. R. Bishop, to be more exact—is known to you and to the public through innumerable newspaper reports, editorials and drawings as a notorious gambler, a destroyer of young manhood, and as a coarse, sensual brute. I know better, and so will you in time."

"Thanks!" sputtered the subject of this singular statement, as particles of the bread fell over the spotless bosom.

"I've read of Mr. Bishop, of course," offered Anholt, "but in spite of the similarity of names——."

"They are the same," said the minister. "Mr. Bishop will, doubtless in time submit you his reason for continuing the maintenance of his establishment. To me it is not an altogether satisfactory one, and I trust in time to convert him to my way of thinking. I know, however, that he has never utilized a dollar of his income from this

source for his personal benefit. I know, further, that it is expended—so far as is possible—in charitable work and along wise and practical lines. Our friend is convinced that in his case the means are justified by the end he has in view. I believe he is mistaken, but at the same time I am foolish enough to think that when a good dollar goes astray it is a religious duty to put it back to the best possible use at the earliest possible time. Hence, I have never hesitated to accept, disburse and account for such funds as have been turned over to me from this questionable source. Mr. Bishop and I were at Oxford together. After his return to the States he wrote me repeatedly, telling me of the tremendous field for efforts of the kind I had engaged in. I, as persistently refused to come, until I learned, through the merest chance of his present vocation. To save him was an argument sufficiently strong to induce my coming at once. Since my arrival he has taught me many things, and they have been things making for the uplifting of mankind. If I have not, as yet, induced him to alter his mind on the subject of his calling, neither have I been able to find another man, who, everything considered, accomplishes more in the way of a philanthropy that really helps men to rise than does our friend. However, you will be able shortly to pass opinion for yourself."

A soft "Amen!" from the little figure was all.

"You, Mr. Anholt, were first called to my attention some four years ago through a series of pamphlets written and published by yourself, in advocation of a new theory of governnment which you had very ingeniously worked out. These pamphlets, with the exception of the last one issued, came to my notice probably a year after their publication. I endeavored to get in touch with you by correspondence, because I was impressed with the manner in which you handled questions similar to the one we discussed tonight, and because without the last copy I was unable to follow your arguments to the end. Ten days ago I learned that a lad, Robert McNamara by name, while under the influence of drink, had been brutally assaulted by a policeman, and that, while the latter stepped around the corner to summon the patrol the young fellow was mysteriously whisked away. From one who is

under obligations to me I learned who rented and paid for a room for the injured lad; who brought him in; who secured the attending physician, and who provided the medicine and food. From McNamara himself, I learned more. To encourage him you related certain incidents of your own life. Under patient and persistent questioning I brought these out. Your name, Anholt, is not a common one and I had not forgotten that of the author of the pamphlets. I looked up your history. I considered your ability and behind the record I recognized the man. You, Anholt, are one I am proud to meet and know. It was by prearrangement I waited for you on Grand street tonight and that Mr. Bishop met us here. The encounter with Essingham was, of course, unexpected."

"Eh! Essingham?" and Bishop was alert.

"I will explain later," said Storey; then again to Anholt: "Mr. Bishop and I have discussed you, your life and motives. I will not say that you have convinced us, but you have impressed us through your printed arguments with the possible adaptability of your ideas to the work we have in hand. It is not improbable that in discussions covering the various phases of your attractive theory you may altogether convert us. Looking toward that end we desire you to join hands with us, in so far as your time will permit, that we may concentrate our efforts as a body on the work which we each appear striving to do now as individuals. Just another word and I am through. Our lives have run in strange channels and with you two men over many tempestuous seas. However much experience may have taught us it has not lessened our radicalism. Nor, even as radicals, do our ideas of doing things comport entirely one with another. If we can't fully agree among ourselves, to expect a critical and suspicious world to accept our views would be folly. By exercising the proper restraint on one another; by concerted action along lines our experience proves most likely to result in success, and by endeavoring to rectify our own faults before presuming to correct those of the country at large, I hope—I can almost believe that a successful test might ultimately be made of the principles you have expounded. Dont," as Anholt started

to speak—"Don't assume that I am above the need of your help because the papers use my stuff to fill their columns, or because for the moment my voice may tickle the ears of an audience in harmony with my views. No young man on a mission as great as ours can be at all times right. Believe me, my friend, despite the good I try to do, I am daily becoming less sure and confident of my ground. Mr. Anholt, Mr. Bishop and myself hope to receive your approval of our plan. We would much prefer, though, if you gave no reply tonight. Think it over. This is merely a get together, get acquainted meeting, you understand. Parker," as the butler appeared, in answer to a bell, "some Triple Sec and glasses. Then you may go for tonight."

Ten minutes later the lips of Storey and Anholt touched the clear, transparent fluid—queen of all the liqueurs—in a good night toast to sleep.

Two delicate hands, trained to marvelous things, shot forth. Two glasses still unemptied, were parted from the encircling fingers. A toss—liqueur, and glasses, smashed to bits, lay in the dying embers of the grate. Then the languid voice:

"Reformation, like charity, gentlemen, should begin at home! The time for reform is now!"

CHAPTER IV.

At the hands of New York City's newspaperdom the name and business of "Sunrise" Bishop received no inconsiderable share of attention. That his place was the most elaborate; his games the squarest, and his clientele the most exclusive in all the great metropolis, was generally conceded. That an influence as powerful as it was mysterious effectually protected him from police interference in the face of concerted and vigorous attacks by the press, was beyond question. The location —even the exterior appearance of the house was known to every reader of the news. Yet no popular outcry; no police reforms; no aggressive campaign against crime and vice by an irritated public had affected for a day the business of this man. He was an unknown quantity to the community in many ways. Some considered him a myth. No two descriptions of him tallied. To the better element he was a threatening, fear inspiring interrogation point. Doubtless there were a few, possessing entreé to this house of chance, who knew or guessed the truth, but to all others he remained nothing but a name. For a time current rumors had declared him to be the wayward son of an eminent local divine, who, some months since had unaccountably disappeared from his customary haunts and from the ken of his many friends. These reports, lacking either confirmation or denial, were, however, generally discredited and soon ceased to circulate at all. Night after night, for weeks and months, now merging into years, the routine of the famous resort remained unchanged. Every detail of management indicated a supreme, intelligent directing power to which Walker, the keen eyed and courteous manager made report. In nothing but the game, was anything left to chance. Every contingency had been provided for; every item of service perfected; every action from the diplomatic move in furtherance of police immunity to the drawing of a curtain was the result of careful thought. As a shrine

at which to woo the fickle dame it remained a masterpiece. In its potentialities for evil, time proved it unsurpassed.

* * * * *

"Bishop, what does this game pay the house?" Anholt gazed steadily across the table into his friend's eyes. They were seated in a small, thickly carpeted room, which, with its heavy flat topped table and two plain revolving chairs, presented a marked contrast to the luxury that prevailed elsewhere throughout the building.

"Last year, Anholt, twelve hundred and twenty-eight dollars and seventeen cents, daily."

"Close figures!" commented the questioner; "and the proceeds?"

"Two hundred and twenty-five for maintenance; two hundred and fifty for the purpose which Storey and I still disagree about; two hundred and fifty toward human betterment, and the balance—well!" and with a flourish of his hands he left his hearer to make his own inference.

"And the cost to the—contributors?"

"The money itself; nothing more."

"And the gain?"

"Assured exemption from police annoyance—also from sharpers. Association with gentlemen; an honest game, and" (with his enigmatical smile) "the mental relaxation necessary to busy men." Nothing, it seemed, could disturb the calm individual who received and promptly replied to Anholt's questions.

"Where do you come in?" Still the persistent voice and searching eyes.

"Financially nowhere. In mental, and if I may use the term, in moral satisfaction under the conditions as I know them, everywhere." Bishop had rested his elbows on the table, clasped his hands, and now, in a tone inexpressibly sweet, continued, "Old chap, don't think in justification of my position here I plead the answers given as my excuse in whole or part. Mine is no puerile action calling for the reasons of a child. You, my friend, when time and place are meet shall have the opportunity, as indeed you have the right to pass upon my course.

I brought you here tonight to see the hell that Bishop keeps. Impress it indelibly on your mind, for in the life of the man before you it is the worst that you will ever find. Perhaps, some day, even it will show a brighter side to you. I don't believe I'm totally wrong. With Storey's help I'm trying hard to see the light."

This from the epigrammatic Bishop; the short spoken, imperturbable being who defied alike, the pulpit, press and public. Again that subtle touch that draws the heart of man to man was felt by Anholt. Before his lips could utter the words his mind had framed, the buzzer, near the door, gave notice of a coming intruder. Bishop, releasing the door's lock by the pressure of a button on the table, stood up, erect and motionless. The face, soft as a girl's a moment since, seemed as if by magic turned to stone. Now it was hard and impassive, as if belonging to a man knowing neither fear nor favor, loss nor gain. It was a mask, worn by the one whose word throughout this house was law; by one whom the greater law, to which we all must bow, had failed so far to reach. The person entering was recognized by Anholt as manager of the establishment. The latter, observing his employer's companion, hesitated.

"Well?" The word snapped from Bishop's lips; it was curt—commanding. The other—Walker by name—approached him and spoke for a minute in low, cautious tones. Anholt understood nothing of what he said. Now his friend answered in words short, decisive, quick.

"Break him—flat! Let Bennett talk! No allowance; no violence, mind you!" That was all. The door closed again. The natural Bishop ("Storey's Bishop" as Anholt learned to call him in the later days) resumed his seat. His visitor relit his cigar. He, who neither smoked nor drank, leaned back in his chair; leisurely raised one foot, resting it on the table's top, and pensively studied the patent leather boot. Two—five—ten minutes passed. Anholt, intensely curious, yet having ample food for thought, smoked on. At last, the smaller man lowered his leg from its elevated rest, turned toward his friend, and said:

"I never permit a man to become a frequenter here unless I have abundant evidence, first of his ability to stand heavy losses without a noticeable impairment of his resources, and secondly, that he has by persistent play become irrevocably attached to the game. Therefore I refuse admission to the amateur. If he succeeds in gaining an entrance his return is prevented by adequate measures. A half hour's play by the embryonic gambler suffices for detection. Walker just reported a case in point tonight. The offspring of some worthy sire has hypnotized himself into the belief that he can handle cards. He managed to pass the lookout under false colors. Here, wait"—reaching over and pressing another one of the series of ivory buttons—"the Bishop recipe, warranted to cure disorders of this kind may interest you. Walker," as the manager reappeared, "admit this gentleman to the finish in room D. He is Mr. Reynolds, understand?"

"Pardon me, the name is Anholt," corrected the one referred to, with a glance at Bishop, which easily interpreted, said: "If I ever get a chance to talk straight to this man I want him to know who his would-be pilot is."

"This gentleman, Walker, is Mr. Anholt." Still the incisive voice expressing indifference to any mental comment his manager might make and absolutely precluding reply. The man bowing, followed his employer's companion from the room. The delicate figure was again seated, the face resuming its pensive look. It was an invariable rule of Bishop's never to see an employee nor give an order except in the presence of or through his manager. No less unalterable was his policy of speaking to none of his staff—Walker not excepted—unless it be on business connected with the house and in this, his private, closely guarded room. At such times the attitude of the man was exactly as Anholt had seen him—erect and impassive, grasping like a flash whatever the situation demanding his attention, and disposing of it on the spot in the fewest possible words—words clear and explicit, as they were also prohibitive of question or reply. Liberal in wages to a fault, he was a puzzle no more intelligible to his employees than he was to the public mind. However little their liking,

their respect for him was infinite. They had yet to realize that his conduct toward them was bred as much of a feeling of contempt as it was of the spirit of discipline. A proprietor criticizing his help because of their faithful performance of duties imposed by him, would to them have been a situation incomprehensible. Only to those knowing the man would any alternative explanation of his conduct appear improbable.

Again the whirr of the buzzer. Again the pressing of a button. This time Bishop's position remained unchanged. He knew who sought admittance. The door opened; Anholt, disgust and determination written on his face, and trembling in agitation as violent as it was beyond control, strode into the room. Walking straight to his seated friend, he stopped, started to speak, reconsidered, and turning, stepped around the table to his chair. With a jerk he brought it up and dropped into it. Leaning over, his arms resting on the table, he again opened his lips, again hesitated, and then, unable longer to restrain himself, gave expression to his thoughts.

"Bishop, with me the pledge of friendship stands until Hell's portals gleam with frost, but by the gods, I still reserve the right to think and speak!"

"That," commented the other, "I should call a rhetorical gem." Neither interest nor concern were evidenced in the softly uttered words. Then, as an afterthought: "Will'st have indulgence in a smoke, my friend? A rich cigar is at thy call. Perchance 'twill calm an aching brow!"

"Damn your cigars! Look here, Bishop, I'm beginning to believe you the vilest scoundrel or the wildest lunatic at large. That sounds pretty strong, but it's straight. If you haven't deluded yourself into believing any crime a virtue then I'm up in the air to find——."

"My boy, you're in the air, right enough!" Still the calm, indifferent voice, now grown exasperating as a taunt to the larger man. "Some men in that position lose their heads and take a sudden tumble, dangerous to their body and fatal to their pride. Others use discre-

tion as a parachute and land safely in the welcoming arms of friends. It's all up to the man."

"Stop it, Bishop! This is no time for play of words. A rascally, dirty swindle was perpetrated on that lad. You know it for you ordered it. And this is your square game—this your boasted gentlemen's club, exempt from crooks and sharps—this your——. Bah! it makes me sick. Bishop—man—my God! Can't you speak the truth just once—to me—your friend?"

Pushing back his chair, he now stood, with hands and arms supporting body as it leaned across the table. His voice, first denunciatory and sarcastic dropped to one of passionate entreaty. If the other heard he gave no sign. In the silence of the room, Anholt's rapid breathing and the ticking of their watches alone were heard. After a time the low toned words:

"Our friend Storey has been here, Anholt, just as you are. He trusts me. Your friend Hope has been here, and he trust me."

"Bishop," came the reply in calmer voice, "God knows I wouldn't be unjust. Nor yet would I presume to pass adversely on acts which these, my friends, have given sanction to. To them was given confidence as yet withheld from me and properly so. They possess the evidence. I do not. But Bishop—friend—let me ask you this. Has either seen—has either passed upon a scene as dark, an act quite as contemptible as this—the robbing of a boy?"

Bishop, with a half turn of the head looked straight in the speaker's eyes. His lips parted as if about to answer. Then after evident reconsideration his jaws closed with a snap.

"Well, Bishop!" said Anholt, "I'm waiting!"

"Did he lose everything?" Query took the place of answer.

"Yes, he lost everything, and right well you know it! Money—even watch and pin!"

"And temper," supplemented the quiet one. "About the riot act; the farewell words of Bennett's—doubtless discouraging to return, eh?"

"Dignify your agent's profane and obscene taunts as best you can," came the retort. "If Hell has a representative on this earth you've got

him here in that fellow. God! for a loud mouthed thief and braggart—Bishop, he wasn't satisfied with open robbery, but ridiculed the boy until the young fellow lost all power of self restraint. Then when he started fight, Bennett and his pals must have him thrown upon the street. But pshaw! what's the use to tell the story to the man who framed the deal?"

"And you," asked Bishop; "where were you?"

"Fooled by your man Walker into believing this the necessary prelude to a happy sequel. I awoke in time to see him started safely home."

"Well, 'fools venture,' and so the story runs. Anholt!"—the words came sharper now—"will this lad come again?"

"Not unless it's with the police—an improbable bit of good luck judging by the way you handle them."

"Will he gamble—soon?"

"I—should—hope—not! if the lesson taught tonight in your boasted house of *gentlemen* and *honest play* takes root."

"Ah!" exclaimed the smaller man, smiling curiously; "reason has supplanted passion—good!"

"By which I may infer?"

"That your common sense will some day approve a program originally my own and sanctioned afterward by our friends."

"Bishop, do you mean to tell me——."

"That you lack the very essential quality of self-control, Anholt. Perhaps it's just as well," he added as if to himself; "only honest men can safely have a trait or failing such as that."

"Your discernment, Bishop, exceeds your frankness. You might stretch the latter a little and give me a small jot of information."

With a movement as sudden as it was unexpected his companion shoved back his chair and stood facing him; saying as he placed his hands under the tails of his evening coat:

"Anholt, for density, no fog I've yet seen off the Banks, can beat your mind tonight. This young fellow was a novice, but wise enough to know that honest games are few, where stakes are large. He knew the reputation of this house, and under false pretenses managed to get in, as he believed among gentlemen. Suppose he'd won—and let me tell you now,

it's winning at the start that puts the shackles on—he'd have come here again and still again—had I permitted—and his winning of tonight would have held a place in memory against a thousand losing and forgotten games. Well, he didn't win—the gentlemen were knaves—the game a swindle! He was robbed, ridiculed, and kicked into the street; and all this in Bishop's place. Therefore, all gambling houses are dens of thieves and those who enter, the prey of crooks. It's poor encouragement to a budding friend of chance. He's had his lesson; impressive, and a trifle hard. Its cost may make it worth remembering. I hope so—I can't tell—that's the chance I take." Bishop, stopping, tried to read the other's thoughts.

"Well?" interrogatively.

"About his money?" asked Anholt.

"Which he can well afford to lose, leaves the tables of green baize for others of plain, unvarnished wood; and food, not chips, will now be bought with it."

His friend without replying began pacing the room with rapid steps. *He* remained, standing motionless—waiting. Decision came to Anholt's mind. He started, with extended hand toward Bishop, to find a warm, responsive grasp.

"Bishop," he said, "I've seen men reach the Land of Great Desire by many long and devious routes. I've seen others, lost, travel in a circle believing they were going straight ahead, but landing, eventually, exactly where they started. I haven't seen the map on which your way is marked, nor can I tell what class you're in, but I'm going to trust you, Bishop—I'm going to back you comrade, right up to the limit of my power."

CHAPTER V.

"Hello! What's this?" Anholt caught the paper fluttering to the floor. "A cheque—five hundred dollars—from Stanley Hope to me—Great Caesar's Ghost! Better look again—your're right—it's there, plain as daylight—five hun——" he brought himself up with a jerk. "Suppose for a change you read the letter. Maybe you'll wake up then." Carefully laying the cheque face downward on the desk, he picked up and cast his eyes over the explanatory sheet. He gave a start and the chair in which he had been leaning back, came down with a sudden thump.

"Ye gods and little fishes! listen, will you, to this?"

"Did you call, Mr. Anholt?" From a table at his left a woman spoke.

"Eh? Oh! no, Miss Von Bonhorst; merely a twitch at the heart, is all." His eyes turned again to the fascinating paper. It read:

"Dear Anholt:—

The enclosed will help a little bit in getting wife and home together again. Keep it and use it. I have more than I require just now anyhow.

Yours to the end,

HOPE."

It was a practice of Stanley Hope's to answer all personal letters promptly on their receipt; not the most difficult task, as he possessed the faculty of condensing his replies into a few short lines, in which, however, the personal feeling was still in evidence. Anholt, mindful of this trait of his friend's, turned the short communication sideways and wrote with crimson ink across its face, in bold letters, the words:

"Thanks. I will.

Gratefully,

ANHOLT."

"That," he commented, after sealing the envelope and handing it to the office boy to mail, "should reach him in an hour. Not bad postal ser-

vice, since it's been less than two hours in reaching me. Oh! Miss Von Bonhorst," addressing the woman who had spoken to him a few minutes earlier, "can you spare a moment?"

Stopping in her work, she came to his desk. There were those who thought Miss Von Bonhorst possessed a hauteur out of keeping with her place. Others attributed her appearance of reserve to some sad experience in life. Still others to a due regard to what she owed herself as the sole female employe in an office filled with clerks. All agreed that she was good looking; many termed her beautiful. None disputed the evidence of her culture and intelligence. To those who knew her best the attributes of a brilliant mentality were manifest in an unobtrusive way. A pronounced brunette, of rather tall, but full and graceful figure, she exhibited the energy and adaptability popularly accredited to that type. Quick and accurate, she had seized with comprehensive glance the essential details of her work. Industrious and forceful, she possessed in times of trial a patience that seemed unlimited. In the evidence of a calm reserve she found her strongest title to respect. In years not over twenty-four or five, she dressed with the simplicity and quiet elegance of a woman carrying greater age. In her personal habits as in her work attention to minor things was manifest. Hair, skin and nails—each told the story of her ever watchful eye. Who she was, beyond her name; whence she came or what her life had been, none but Anholt and the firm—if indeed the latter knew—could tell. Employed by the former as stenographer, the firm's active head had, within the month, drafted her for confidential work. Her influence was little short of Anholt's own. She had written her credentials in her work. In the language of the day she had "made good," and that was quite enough to know.

As she reached his side, Anholt handed her the cheque, at the same time advising her of the letter's contents.

"What a man!" she commented.

"And," said Anholt, "what a glorious surprise to the little girl of mine! I'll feel like writing her in rhyme tonight—thus early dawns the sunshine of our sweet domestic bliss, or something along that line—kind of smooth and flowery like you know."

The woman smiled. "You're in rare mood today. I suppose congratulations are in order," adding after a pause, "You've really decided to accept this?"

Anholt looked up with a half astonished, half interrogatory air. "Accept it—Great Guns! yes. I've already accepted it. What possible alternative could there be?"

"None, I suppose. It means so much to you; and yet——" the woman hesitated.

"Out with it!" exclaimed the man. "Let's see the little joker. I might have known I'd overlook a card when dealt a hand like this."

"Why, Mr. Anholt! Do you pass your evenings with our entry clerks? But really and truly, I didn't mean—I—why of course you should accept it."

"Oh! Come now, Miss Von Bonhorst. Evasion and hesitancy are not your forte. The inference is too obvious. You know, sometimes it's politic to be frank. Pardon me, you're standing," and he proffered her a chair.

Forced on the defensive by Anholt's words and act, the woman's natural propensity for candor conquered her fear of being charged with playing a presumptuous part. Seating herself in such position as would bring his face in profile, she said:

"A woman's sentiment, you know, Mr. Anholt, seldom finds its birth in reason, and I suppose you are right; but I'd rather hoped you would make your way without—well, without anybody's financial assistance. There, I've said it! and you shouldn't have urged me."

"But, Miss Von Bonhorst, aid is something we all must receive at times. Why discriminate as to the kind—between let us say, work and gold? One's obligation is as great to the giver of the one as to the other; the acceptance of gold no less honorable than that of work—coming, I mean, under conditions such as this and if—one makes an honest effort to pay it back."

"From the point of one in need I know you're right," she replied. "I'm the last person in the world who ought to argue that with you." Somewhere in the woman's armor he had touched a tender, penetrable spot.

"Don't, please! You know that such a thought was furthest from my mind." He picked up a pencil and tapped lightly on the desk. "Of course," he reflected, "I'm not in need as a matter of existence, but *this* would mean a near approach to life." Again he spoke to the woman. "Don't you understand what all this means to me; wife, and home, and regularity of life—the ideal combination of effective forces to insure a man's best work?"

"Yes," she responded, "I do understand, but don't you think that by a temporary curtailment of your generosity, you might reap the benefit of all these factors without incurring this added obligation? I'm sure Mrs. Anholt would be happier in a little flat, rented furnished if you must, and paid for out of what you can earn, than in a costlier home procured at another man's expense. And—you would find ample compensation in your independence."

"Do you believe Mr. Hope would endorse your opinion?" asked Anholt, partially convinced that she was right.

"Mr. Hope gives as a matter of course," she replied; "and, I suppose expects the acceptance of his gifts in the same spirit. If you accept this money you will not be lowered a bit in his estimation; but if I were in your position and wanted an opportunity to show the kind of stuff I was made of, I'd supplement my acknowledgment of his kindness by a courteous but firm refusal of the cheque and send it by a special messenger at once. I know," she concluded, "you'll call that all sentiment and a woman's way."

"No I won't. I've infinite respect for your opinion and you know it. But I do believe for just this once I can go contrary to your advice and still be right. Here I am since my last advance—drawing what? Twenty-five a week. I might, by rigid economy, 'tis true, in time accumulate the necessary sum; but it would mean a reduction in my remittances to Mrs. Anholt, which goodness knows, are quite too little now. It would mean a further retrenchment in my own cost of living, and worst of all an absolute cutting off of the little good I am doing now among the ones who need help most. In other words, in refusing this—loan, I am depriving my wife of many needed comforts, myself of common necessi-

ties, and at a time when a little aid may mean a man's salvation, I'm robbing him of that. Everybody suffers because I choose to bank on futures which may materialize or not. Here," picking up the cheque, "is the actuality—wife, home, happiness and a better chance to help some other poor devil who can't live on theory or sentiment, however promising it may appear. Believe me, Miss Von Bonhorst, I appreciate most fully all that you have said, and especially do I value the motive inspiring the words, but——," folding the cheque and placing it in his pocket, "I've chased the illusive mirage of unsatisfying hope until I'm tired. Let me rest now in the Temple of Today!"

The words, typical of the man, had closed the door to further argument.

"And yet," she said arising, "I fear in that illusion the germ of all your reasoning found its origin. Anyhow"—her eyes grew tender—"for your sake I hope the proverbial infallibility of woman's intuition will prove at fault for once. Perhaps—it will!"

"Perhaps!" he agreed in a low tone as both returned to their uncompleted tasks.

A substantial oaken railing separated the space occupied by the main office force from that reserved for the use of Anholt and Miss Von Bonhorst. Passing through the latter semi-private enclosure one reached the office used exclusively by the members of the firm. During the clerks' absence at the noon luncheon hour, Anholt invariably remained at his desk in order to give immediate and proper attention to any client dropping in within that time. Today he looked forward to this recess with a feeling of impatience. In spite of the decision his words to Miss Von Bonhorst would imply his having taken as regards the gift—or loan—of Hope, a sense of doubt, impossible to overcome, held possession of his mind. An insistent something, strangely indefinable and vague, induced recurrence of his thoughts, to the woman's candid advice. He determined, during the short surcease from pressing duties of the day, to discuss the matter further with himself and to search for a more cogent argument justifying his acceptance of the check, than he had as yet brought forth. If he failed

—well then perhaps, he might subordinate his inclination to what he termed "the vagaries of a woman's mind."

Almost coincident with the striking of the noonday hour—with the noise and bustle of the departing clerks, fearful lest they lose a minute of the work exempted time; and with faint acknowledgment of Miss Von Bonhorst's pleasantry as she left the office, he gave vent to a sigh of relief, extracted from a pocket in his vest a monstrous long and black cigar, and leaned back with feet reposing on the desk, feeling equipped to handle with unbiased mind the proposition before him.

Scarce had the first ascending wreaths of steel gray hued and curling smoke reached the ceiling in vain attempt for liberty, when a closing of the outer door, followed by the sound of an intruder's slow, approaching footsteps caught his ear. Smothering an exclamation of annoyance, he brought his chair down with a thud, assumed an attitude more in harmony with the post he occupied, and turned—to see the bent form and sallow countenance of his undisguised enemy—Samuel Withers, of the League. Startled, but with emotion hidden beneath a smile of well feigned pleasure, he arose to meet his visitor, whose further progress was blocked by the heavy rail.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Withers; how are you?—unexpected—quite!"

"So I should assume, sir," came the dry reply. "Thank you," as Anholt unlatched the low gate in invitation to the other to come in. Disregarding the extended hand, the old man took the offered chair, removed his hat and with hands resting on the gold knob of his cane waited until the more agile one resumed his seat. The latter, with a deliberation scarcely reflecting his anxiety to terminate the interview before the clerks returned, relit the slightly burned cigar—a vigorous puff or two—then laid it carefully down again and faced the associate founder of the League.

"Go ahead!" The tone was one designed to force a prompt exposure of the other's reason for this call.

"You are impertinent, sir!" The thin, shrill voice was as exasperating as the retort. "Please to remember I'm here because of duty, sir, and not

to bandy words with fellows of your ilk. I'll talk, and finish sir," stamping with his cane upon the floor, "when I am ready, not before."

"Enough of that!" said Anholt. "I'll hear you only, if you talk at once. That's a concession, considering the excitement you're laboring under. I can guess, though, what you want to say, having had substantial evidence already of the animus influencing your actions toward me."

"You *shall* hear me, sir—you shall! Understand first, I know you—know who and what you are. Your high flown talk won't excuse you, sir, with me. You can fool Mr. Hope——."

"We'll eliminate Mr. Hope from this discussion."

"Yes, and may God forgive him, sir, for ever asking charity for such as you! That reminds me, sir—where is the money we gave you? An honest man would have kept account——."

"*We*," interrupted Anholt, "gave nothing; but I don't mind telling you that a record has been kept of every expenditure, and Mr. Hope—I am *obliged* to mention his name—has it. I may say further that I've paid back, within a few dollars, the full amount advanced me."

"I don't believe it, sir! But if you did, dare you admit where you got the money? *I* know, sir. *I'll* tell you," and the aged man shook his finger in Anholt's face. "In that hell hole kept by a miserable wretch named Bishop. You're a gambler, sir! You've used the money given by God's charity to pander to your vice. That vile creature is your associate. It's with his filthy, sin-cursed gold you pay your obligation to the Lord. Deny your connection with him, sir! I dare you to deny it!"

Anholt, less startled by the violent tone and gestures of his caller than by his unexpected reference to his friend, hesitated to reply. Finally he said:

"Mr. Withers, Mr. Bishop is my friend and the friend of many a better man than either you or I. But that just now is neither here nor there. You haven't come here simply to display your venom. What is it you want?"

"What I want, sir, is to warn you to keep away entirely from the League, and more than that, to stop associating with our members. When Mr. Hope learns what you are he'll be the first——."

"I told you once before," interrupted Anholt, "to leave that gentleman's name out of your remarks. Now about your wishes. Suppose I don't care to pay any attention to them, then what?"

"If not, I'll find a way to make you go, sir, and go like a whipped cur. I've got evidence enough here now," tapping his coat pocket, "to prove you a traitor to the men who took you out of jail. Now, sir, will you go, or must I scandalize the League to force you out?"

"I'll answer that, but let me say this first. You've been furnished from some source with bits of information substantiating in a way the derogatory opinion you had already formed of me. Without considering the various kinds of silly asses such action would make you resemble, you posted here hot footed in your excited state of mind, acted in a manner both undignified and rude, and used some very harsh and ugly terms. What have you accomplished? Nothing but your own abasement. Now, *you*—go ahead and use your information as you will. When you're through I'll still remain a member of the League. I'll still retain the confidence of the men who, as you say, 'took me out of jail.' I'll do more good and save more men despite that malignant tongue of yours, than the record of your whole self-centered life can show. Your intentions may be all right. I don't know. But I do know that you're one of the decadent roots of a very flourishing tree, under the branches of which I expect to rest and labor for many years to come. For whatever nourishment you helped to give the tree while it was young I owe you thanks. For, and in answer to all you've said today, *I* say, damn you Withers and all your threats!"

With his last words Anholt, leaving his chair, walked to the railing and opened the gate. One construction only could be placed upon the act. The old man, with a look that told of unutterable hate, picked up his hat and passed out without reply.

"Withers," commented Anholt to himself, searching his pockets for another match, "has got something sticking in his craw of worse portent to me than anything suggested by his words. How in thunder did he happen to spring Bishop's name? It looks, my boy, as if the thermometer was showing a decided upward tendency today!" He struck the match

with a show of irritation. "I suppose now I ought to raise the storm signal to Hope, but pshaw! what's the use? I've caused him enough bother as it is. I think, 'sir' Withers, we two will fight this out between ourselves. And there," he reflected, "is Hope's check. I've had no chance to figure that out. It occurs to me that fate has played—ah! wise thought. Old fellow, I'll put it up to you." His hand searching in his pocket brought forth a silver coin. "Heads, I keep it—tails, I don't!" A flip—it came down, spun for an instant on the desk, and toppled over, the features of the goddess up.

"That, I suppose," he observed, picking the coin up, "is what Hope would call 'hugging the edge of the ethical sea.' Well when lines become so faint they can't be seen one needs must walk by chance!"

Thus was disclosed another phase of the man's complex character. Who of us can say that his way was not the wisest after all?

CHAPTER VI.

Including host and hostess there were twelve persons seated around the massive table in the dining-room of Stanley Hope's home.

Now, whenever Hope decided that the spring of his optimism was in danger of pollution by the pessimistic germ, he sought the reassuring atmosphere of a few congenial friends; contending that in the spirit of good fellowship one could always find a sure specific for the ills of doubt. And he, at times, had trouble with his doubts, just as you, and I, and every other man who makes of life a real and living issue, must have. For somehow in the philosophy of our being we note that virtues all find ground for combat with the less alluring tendencies of our minds. Optimism finds its challenger in doubt, and the contest waged between the two is one that never ends. And the more we give the matter thought, the stronger our conviction grows that fools alone can never see the darker side of things. The optimistic idea, from a more or less unmeaning term, has evolved into a science which takes the situation as it comes, submits it to the keen analysis of sane but hopeful minds; accepts the good, rejects the bad—then with the energy of its kind attacks all points concerning which a doubt may still exist, and moulds them from uncertainties into vital factors for the good. The pessimist is satisfied with nothing—the fool with everything. He of the optimistic temperament, through logic, hope and work still moves the world.

All of this describes the creed by which Hope lived. Ofttimes surrounded by his friends he would pave the way for a warm discussion of this thing or that, concerning which he knew at least some present would express a strong opinion of distrust. Here and there he would note a word, an idea or a half uttered thought, and by and by when conversation lagged, his few, crisp, lucid sentences, the result of all that he had heard them say, placed on the subject an altogether different and usually a brighter light. Thus in radiating his cheerfulness to his friends, he found in expressions which they used, a medium through which he reinforced his own belief.

Within the past few days his patience had been sorely tried, both at the League, where the former régime's adherents still manifested their dissatisfaction with the current policy, and in the commercial field, where an unscrupulous competitor's finessé had brought him irreparable and heavy loss. Hence the chosen group around his board tonight. But let us state exception here. His invitations numbered nine, for in Hope's home provision always must be made for the unexpected, but ever welcome guest. Tonight, by some queer freak of chance, the twelfth chair held the man of men one might expect to strike discordant note—the Old Man Doubtful of the League—Withers, the aged, the irreconcilable. True, he was within his rights. His friendship antedated that of any other person there, and Stanley Hope, regardless of their wide divergence of opinion at many crucial times, retained a feeling of affection for this old man whose courage of conviction had never yet been called in question. Perhaps, indeed, his very isolation in the world—deprived by death of chosen helpmeet, and poor in friends by reason of his narrowness of mind, had influenced the other's attitude toward him. Certain it is that more than once in recent years Withers had dropped in just as he had done tonight, and—if the truth were told—had experienced a feeling of content while there, in the presence frequently, of men whose sentiments he so vigorously opposed. On his appearance, therefore, tonight, no construction could be placed of intent inimical to any other guest. And this was well, for opposite him and seated at the left of Mrs. Hope, was Anholt, subject of his inexplicable and undissembled hate. Of others present there was Storey, seated at the right of Hope; opposite him sat Powers, a mainstay in the Corporation Counsel's office, with Miss Wilberforce, of the public schools; Emerson, the broker; and Cunningham, treasurer of the League, filling out his side. Secretary Patterson, Mrs. Patterson, and Shelley, a coming light in the legal firmament, seated between Storey and Anholt, rounded out the list.

One might suppose that whenever groups like this assembled in the home of Stanley Hope, the trend of conversation would follow no prearranged or definite course, but rather, would mark by its haphazard way the moods and passing inclinations of the guests, exposing little of their

more serious ideas and beliefs. But a mental memorandum made by one who watched, would disclose the fact that each one present had argued, explained or passed opinion on the subject which seemed of greatest moment to himself. Of monopoly in discussion there was none, but by a slight suggestion now and then the host made each a willing if unintentional entertainer of them all. Nor was it less a fact that in this way he found much good material on which to base appraisement of their individual worth.

Thus it was that with the serving of the cheese, the conversation veered from Easter bonnets, in whose behalf Miss Wilberforce had made a more or less convincing plea—Hope having characterized them as an imposition on the man—to Shelley's comprehensive if somewhat tedious explanation of why he lost his last important case, an incidental result of which was that his client now would lose his head.

"Shelley's excuse," Powers made haste to say—helping himself for the third time to the Camembert, "is a good deal like the argument he inflicted on the jury. It's a fine, long winded piece of talk. In another hour he'd have won his case—that is, if dreams go by contraries and men could vote while they're asleep. I suppose, though, the poor devil had to have someone."

"As a matter of fact," observed Cunningham, "the fellow deserves some credit for selecting Shelley. If I remember rightly he told the Herald man he didn't want to live."

"Rail on, rail on, you fellows!" the lawyer made retort. "Many a little debt like this you're running up has been liquidated by the payment of a good sized retainer fee."

"From a man," commented Emerson, " who makes a specialty of criminal procedure, the words are ominous. They might, with reason be called a trifle bit impertinent."

"You boys will have a really, truly quarrel some of these days," ventured Mrs. Patterson, in doubt as to the intent underlying Emerson's words. "The papers said Mr. Shelley's speech was just a fine one——."

"Yes," supplemented Powers, "and they said his personality was most engaging. What more, for the money, could his client want? Especially," he added, "as his chief aim was to die."

"Let the dead past take care of its own troubles, Powers," said their host. Then to the company in general: "Apropos of capital punishment, Storey tells us, if Anholt would go up against the pros and cons he'd harmonize the bunch."

"Not harmonize, Stanley—hypnotize," corrected Patterson.

"Thanks! I stand corrected. Since he's converted Storey it must have been by anything but logic. Now if it had been our friend Withers here—I say, Anholt, train your guns his way. He's as rabid a friend of the hangman as Most is of the bomb."

"The word 'friend,' Stanley, doesn't do his feelings justice. I should say idolater," broke in Patterson again.

"Right again! Patterson here, must be figuring on revising Funk & Wagnalls. Now, if Withers will lay himself open to conviction——."

"Oh! yes, Mr. Withers, please do," exclaimed Mrs. Hope, clapping her hands faintly. "Let us have a demonstration of Mr. Anholt's powers."

Storey, the only one present except Anholt who understood the dangerous trend of the conversation, now made a remark which caused the latter to glance wonderingly toward him.

"It's a cheerful way you fellows have—pardon me, Mrs. Hope—of selecting victims for the sacrifice. Now I don't observe any broad smile of appreciation on the face of our friend, Withers, there."

"Without mentioning," remarked Emerson, "that Anholt might prefer a less tough subject to test his logic on."

"Not at all," responded Anholt, taking his cue from Storey. "Mr. Withers, I feel confident will gladly enter the lists in behalf of his less courageous friends." To the majority at the table his words and smiling countenance conveyed nothing more than a friendly dare. To Withers their full significance was clear. It was a fling of the gauntlet; a challenge defiant and direct; a biting and sarcastic taunt veiled under cover of smooth words. That the old man understood was proved by his face.

"Sirs," he said, addressing no one in particular and vainly endeavoring to restrain himself; "I'm an old man and in my time I've formed a few impressions, both of men and things, sirs, that don't admit of change. I've opinions, sir," speaking to Anholt now direct, "on other things than the hanging of a rogue which would require more evidence than words of yours to change. I protest, sirs," again speaking to them all, "against being longer made a party to such tommyrot as this."

"With all due regard to the disparity in our ages," Anholt felt impelled to answer, as he looked the other steadily in the eyes, "I will say now, that I expect with you, to make conviction follow evidence submitted by myself, on subjects more pertinent to the welfare of us both than is the one we've mentioned here." Then, fearful that his words might place him in the light of lacking consideration for his host, he added, speaking to the company: "Really, there is nothing original—certainly nothing radical in the idea which unfortunately I unfolded to Storey here. He's magnified a suggestion into a solution and seems to think on account of my questionable paternity to the first I should defend any construction he chooses to place on the latter."

"The trouble with Anholt," retorted the minister, "is that whenever he gets an idea that's altogether wrong he'll pump his argument at you until you half believe he's right. When he strikes a trail that probably would lead to something worth the while, he lags behind and wants the other fellow to go ahead and blaze the balance of the way. When he's wrong he's right, and when he's right somebody else has got to prove it."

"For shame, Mr. Storey; I think Mr. Anholt quite courageous in agreeing to meet Mr. Withers in defense of his plan. I'm sure he's equally prepared to meet some other nominee." Anholt, to this defense of him by Mrs. Hope, bowed his thanks.

"I don't know what particular branch of occult science is being studied here," observed Powers, leaning back and extending his legs in a most undignified manner; "or whether Hope has inaugurated a course in mental telepathy unbeknown to me, but if somebody will tell me what all this talk's about, I think I'd feel less like a fool—that is, if anybody knows."

"Correct! Powers," said his host. "If Storey here will leave Mrs. Patterson alone long enough to state the question so we all know something about it, we'll make it a table issue. Suppose we adjourn to the library first. Storey will be excused for taking his cigar there."

"Right, oh!" agreed the minister, arising and leading the way with Mrs. Patterson. Five minutes later chairs and couch were drawn in an irregular semicircle around the fire. Notwithstanding the genial warmth of the late spring days, the nights were chill, and the soft, red glow of burning logs made fitting capsheaf to the wealth of comfort Hope at all times offered to his guests. Storey, of course, had pre-empted the largest and therefore to him the most comfortable chair within the room. Seated in this, and furthest from but directly facing the fire he resembled as Powers remarked, "an interlocutor of the old time minstrel type, with the wielders of bones and tambourines duly ranged on either side." Now, whenever the minister had opportunity presented for a smoke, none who knew him would delude themselves into expecting speech or comment until the grayish tip of ash had taken full and rounded form. Apropos of which truth Powers felt called upon to say that "All one needs with Storey at such a time is patience and sufficient self restraint to refrain from saying what one thinks." In confirmation of which expert diagnosis the clerical gentleman puffed complacently on, threatening occasionally with half closed eyes to defy convention by resort to sleep. Emerson, inspired by the big man's somnolescent air was endeavoring to start a discussion on the relative advantages of modern pajamas as against the old time sleeping gown, when Storey, with a sigh betokening infinite regret, opened his eyes, emitted one last, lingering series of delicate, whitish rings, carefully placed his treasure on the convenient tray, and said:

"If my understanding of our friend's position is correct, he doesn't believe in capital punishment or life imprisonment at all; but, conceding that for a time at least, we must have them, suggests certain modifications of the law which, I am inclined to think, might eliminate many of the most objectionable features. He would make the proving of a consistent criminal record an essential condition to the imposition of the death penalty. Perhaps he can be inveigled into explaining it himself."

"You've said it all in one sentence," returned Anholt; then to the company: "It has always appeared to me an anomalous phase of the law which gives the presiding judge no latitude when pronouncing sentence for the major crime, while with every other criminal offense the 'tempering of justice with mercy' is permissible in large degree, because of history, influence, or of a thousand other reasons, both good and bad. But in homicide—and I refer to that grade where premeditation plays a part—no vestige of discretion is vested either with the judge or jury so far as the penalty is concerned, if they are loyal to their oaths and deliberate intent is proved. Death or life incarceration according to the state, is the only, the inevitable price the man must pay—a condition, which if less serious would approach to a burlesque of justice. It is the only crime where a man's record is not considered in imposing the penalty. The burglar, by virtue of his calling a potential destroyer of human life—by deed and intent a menace to us all, may, if the court so wills, assuage the anger of the law by one, or at most, a very few short years of servitude. On the other hand we find a man—let me state an actual case—of marked integrity, loyal to his family and watchful of his obligations to the church. One day the tongue of slander leaves its lurid imprint on the reputation of his child. He seeks the thing that gave life to the lie; retraction is refused; he kills it and leaves the carcass where it falls. Premeditation? Yes. The facts are clear, and because the thing was born in human form the least the law can do—in this particular state—is to place an honest man behind the bars for life. Over twenty years ago this very thing occurred. I saw the shooting as a boy. Today, an old man, muttering incoherent words, wanders up and down the corridors of a prison's insane ward. Robbed of liberty and the companionship of decent men, his mind diseased, his life a living hell, his family in disgrace and scattered to the winds, and the daughter long since forced to bear with cause the very charge that when untrue had wrought her father's doom—this—all of this is what society has exacted. What has it gained? You can answer that. And yet it takes persistent violators of the penal code; swindlers, thugs, second story men and all—note what minute percentage ever pay the maximum penalty prescribed by law—permits them on release from

each short prison stay, to mingle unmolested in acknowledged haunts of criminals, and so they menace, rob and slay. In due course the farce is re-enacted—arrest, conviction, short time penalty and all—and so it goes. Meanwhile, reformers talk and pray. I'm becoming more and more confirmed in the belief that he who slays and by that act commits his only criminal offense, is far less dangerous to the community at large than is the crook who prospers by his wits. I never yet have known a single authentic case in which an honest man—I use the word advisedly—proved guilty of a capital offense and by the interposition of a pardoning power permitted to resume his life among free men, has repeated the crime. I *can* name more than one man of the kind standing high on the ladder of commercial or political pursuits. But when I seek to find a substantiated record of some habitual criminal seeking and leading, unwaveringly, a consistent, honest life, the search appears almost hopeless. Perhaps the fault lies with society; perhaps with the man himself. I shall not attempt to say. The fact remains that so far as murder is concerned, whether the one committing it has led an unblemished, Christian life, or whether he be thrice convicted thief, with death ever lurking in the shadows of his acts, the law makes no distinction. Neither the proving of a virtuous, blameless career nor the evidence of a record filled with crime shall avail this way or that. The court could not discriminate if it would. In other things we hold the past fair basis for prophesy of the future. Will the interests of society be less served by open acknowledgment of this truth and by applying it as fully to one guilty of the greater offense as to another convicted of simple larceny? If our dispensation of justice is to move along intelligent and consistent lines then let us have a code of laws embodying a system of reasoning uniform throughout. Today, in minor offenses this man is granted leniency because his previous life was clean. For the same violation of the criminal code another man must serve a longer sentence because he's been habitually a wrong doer. The principle is good. And so, when we touch the gravest crime of all—as we have learned to view it—if we *must* take human life; if we *must* incarcerate a man for all his years, let us act in reason. Let us make the impo-

sition of these penalties conditional at least upon the production of substantial proof that the slayer is a graduate from the school of crime."

Anholt had paused at intervals as if he courted comment. Now, in reaching for the bonbon dish he signified that he was through. The others, by common impulse turned their eyes on Shelley, who by virtue of his profession should be the one best qualified to speak upon the issue Anholt had raised.

"I think," he said, in answer to the mute request, "that I can understand the premises on which Mr. Anholt has based his argument. I should like to ask him, though, what, in his mind, would constitute the proof of confirmed criminal practices in any one man's case?"

"The habitual criminal act," answered Anholt, "in force in many states, has already solved that problem to a slight extent."

"But it's failed in practice, everywhere," objected Shelley.

"Yes, because society has yet to learn that a minor offense when committed by a confirmed thief, deserves a penalty more severe than does murder when done by one who never erred before. Having designated death or life imprisonment as the supreme punishment, and by long years of undisputed practice having become confirmed in the belief that the murderer alone deserves such a sentence, it is not strange that we lack the disposition to enforce a law making one subject to its imposition for any other act. If, in criminal procedure we gave less attention to the deed itself and more to the circumstances surrounding and inducing it we'd be much nearer to the goal. I am confident the conditions made necessary by the habitual criminal law—namely, conviction for a number of offenses before life imprisonment can be imposed, could be made a basis on which to work out the problem we are discussing. Only I would make the number of convictions five instead of three. I should not consider that a too rigid requirement by any means. I don't believe the third or even the fourth transgression always indicates an irretrievable lapse from a moral life. A fifth might—since for our purpose some limit must be placed—be considered as leaving little, if any, hope for the man's regeneration."

"Anholt," said Storey, "I thought you held no man so bad as that."

"Please to remember," retorted his friend, "I'm talking from an impersonal point of view. I'm subjugating my aversion to the extreme penalty under any circumstance in trying to prove your much talked of common ground an actual piece of earth."

The minister sighed. "I'm relieved," he remarked. "I began to think I had harbored a delusion. By the way, friend Withers, what is your opinion of this dream of Anholt's?"

The latter started, fearful lest this time the spark would touch the powder. The lean, gaunt figure, seated nearest to the fire, for the moment, scarcely seemed to have heard the question. Then with a snort of disdain and with eyes still resting on the flame, he answered in a tone of unconcealed contempt:

"I never pass opinion, sir, on arguments of men who speak with knowledge of any phase of crime. My own experience, sir, and I regard it as a most fortunate one, has been limited to dealing with fairly honest people. I own, sir, I would like to know what degree of punishment this expert"—turing his sneering eyes full on Anholt—"would expect to pay if charged with the killing of a man."

Ignoring at first the open slur in the old man's reply to Storey, and apparently unconscious of the surprise and indignation manifested in the faces around him, Anholt smilingly replied:

"My dear Mr. Withers, under laws conditioned on such lines I should be quite exempt from anything approaching the extreme penalty. The victims of our application of the old Mosaic law, as I have taken pains to emphasize, must be shown to be habitual violators of the criminal code. Not through one offense, or two, or three, but with a regularity and frequency conclusively demonstrating their operations to be acts of choice and not of chance. And mind you, too, the record must be one of proof and not assumption based upon a probability, however strong. Understand me on this point; I want to see a just discrimination made in favor of the man who sometime in the past transgressed his country's laws; who, though he long since satisfied those laws, still quivers 'neath the ceaseless sting of an unappeasable society; who follows in the Master's steps and in the sunshine of His work finds his shame more vividly

outlined; who dares to do the right, and for it bears the taunts and jeers of those who consider him a hypocrite; whose open wounds are kept exposed by libelous tongues; who bows beneath the burden of unfounded charges made by cowards—by curs afraid to touch the reputation of one who never fell—by social and religious parasites who plead exemption from retributory justice because the modern maxim runs, 'Believe all things derogatory of the man who once committed wrong.' I want to see that man, when charged with shedding human blood, receive the utmost leniency a just and honest law can grant. That such a man has lived his life, and until then has kept his heel from crushing out the life of hissing reptiles at his feet, entitles him to all the consideration any court can be empowered to give. For such a man has no consistent life of crime behind him, to darken now the door of hope. Now, sir"—the words rang out clear and strong—"answering your query, I would say, that if through innuendoes, lies and sneers, some man should make my existence seem a hell, and I should throttle out his life, then I should be entitled as a right, to clemency no less pronounced than I have urged for other victims of that class of cowardly and vindictive sneaks."

Hope, during Anholt's reply to Withers, had leaned over and whispered briefly to Storey. The latter, the instant his friend stopped speaking and before opportunity could exist for either comment or answer by the older man, exclaimed:

"Bravo! well put, I call that; but we've got to adjourn this discussion now. Anholt and I have got some missionary work to do elsewhere tonight, and along less original lines—that is, if I can ever drag him away——."

"I forgot all about it," interrupted the other, grasping the meaning behind his friend's unexpected remark, "and"—looking at his watch—"if I mistake not we're past due now."

A scarcely audible sigh of relief, passing around the group, mingled with the low-toned murmurs of feigned regret at their departure. Anholt, glancing back at Withers, who still retained his seat, observed him with clenched hands and half extended arms muttering to himself, as if invoking an unseen power to aid him in some dark and vengeful act. Shelley, per-

haps of all present, was disappointed at the sudden termination of what promised to be an argument appealing to his professional sense.

"I want you to come up and see me some evening, old fellow," he said, as Anholt prepared to leave. "I believe between us we could whip that thought of yours into shape—that is, if you don't mind letting another have a finger in the pie."

"Thanks, I will!" as he started for the door.

Hope, accompanying the two men to the reception hall, turned to Storey, saying: "I owe you thanks, old chap—the sky looked pretty ominous for a while." Then he addressed Anholt. "What kind of a fracas have you and Withers started, anyhow?"

"I'll put the answer up to him," was the reply. "He's playing from a hand I've never seen. If he won't explain, I'll do the best I can the next time I see you."

"Good enough! Good night, fellows, and good luck!"

"Nice cad, I am," muttered Anholt, as the door closed on them; "to insult a man's hospitality by venting my personal spite before his guests!"

"You did quite right, my friend. I'm the responsible culprit. I told you long ago to advise Hope——."

"Yes; well I didn't. Where away now?" as if desirous of changing the subject.

"To treat the first unfortunate we run across to a smile—I mean a literal one," and he chuckled as they rounded the corner and started south along the Boulevard.

CHAPTER VII.

Anholt was seated at his desk in the office of Carter & Dixon. A young fellow leaned over his shoulder. One who was short and thick set; his ill groomed appearance contrasting sharply with that of the carefully dressed man sitting in the chair. His face, devoid of beard or moustache, gave indubitable proof of a hard, uncharitable past. No more distinguishable were the half healed wounds upon the cheek and forehead than were the evidences of a checkered life apparent in the lights and shadows playing across his countenance. Shadows that told the story of association with vicious things; of dissolute companions; of kicks, discouragement and drink; of a devil-may-care nature nurtured by misfortune and breathing its intense antipathy to the law—the law that excited his derision because of performances, to his knowledge too often bordering on burlesque. As against all this one saw at times the play of softer passions; of a disposition marked by traces of an impulsive, generous heart; of an affection almost canine for the hand extended in his aid; of a temperament absolutely immune from fear, and with strong proclivity for the truth, regardless of result. There were moments when his attitude and the expression of his face might well have been construed as being reminiscent of a more auspicious long ago. For true it is that blood will tell, and somehow despite the seeming consecration of a life to vice, the earmarks of nobility never totally disappear. Robert McNamara had traced his steps along some tortuous and very shady paths; but for the man behind whose back he stood; the man who had lifted his bruised and unconscious form from off the street, and had carried him, stranger that he was, from out the clutches of the police; the man who had watched over him; furnished him with food, and medicine, and clothes, and argued him into a half belief in better things—for this man his aim and struggle now should be to try and show deserving worth. It was, therefore, with no feeling of unseemly disrespect that he exclaimed, while pointing with not the cleanest finger to a personal in the Herald:

"Now, what 'ell did I tell yer, Boss? Git next ter this!"

"Easy, Bob; easy!" Anholt answered, catching with his eye the paragraph the other pointed out. An instant later he started up, dropped the inevitable cigar, and seizing the paper with both hands, read the following:

"If Anson Van Anholt, 30 years old, 5 feet 11½ inches in height, weighing about 180 pounds, dark brown eyes and black hair, slightly tinged with gray, will address the undersigned, a settlement may be arranged saving him unpleasant exposure. Anybody knowing this man's whereabouts will be rewarded by addressing, E 179, Herald, Downtown."

Anholt looked up. "Will you please be seated, Bob?" The words were so low as to be indistinguishable by Miss Von Bonhorst, seated near. For a time he continued staring at, rather than reading the astonishing notice. Bob, swinging his hat between his knees grew restive.

"Well, I'll be teetotally dad pounded!" his patron exclaimed at last, and with a vehemence causing more than one clerk to raise his head in wonder. "Some friend," he added, "has certainly lampooned me with a vengeance."

"Friend, nit," snorted MacNamara. "I'm wise ter dat play all right, all right. Say, did yer ever know a bull at Headquarters wot they call Essingham?"

Anholt looked up with increased interest. "Well—I—should—say—yes. But, Bob, be careful; speak low."

The young fellow edged his chair closer to the desk. "Now I'm goin' ter put yer wise. Look 't here, Boss, what'd I promise yer when yer put me next ter dis job?"

"You said you'd play square, Bob, and leave off drink and dope. Wasn't that it?"

"Sure thing, only I wasn't lookin' ter stack up against no sich stiff game as wot I've bucked, but s'help me God, Boss, I never held nothin' out and I'm dealin' 'em straight."

"I believe that, boy. You've made good all along the line. But where does this come in?" pointing to the personal.

"Jist keep yer shirt on fer er minnit, will yer," trying to move his chair even nearer to Anholt. "Here I goes pluggin' around here and passin' booze joints wit' hands on me eyes and soon's I git by and up goes me

head, what 'ell does me lamps light on but er plain clothes bull wonderin' would he try me fer a touch er not. Well, jist nachurally me nerves goes broke, havin' no red eye ter keep 'em ter th' good, and meetin' er cop puts me feet ter th' cold storage—especially as how havin' done nothin' ter git pinched fer, I ain't got no alibi fit. So havin' sung me farewell hymn ter booze and wantin' er steadier fer meself, I goes down and blows two bits fer celery from th' dago, havin' once heerd that it was good fer——."

"In the name of the great double jointed toad!" broke in Anholt, suppressing a laugh in spite of his impatience, "cut out the history of your life and talk turkey, man."

"What 'ell—all right, Boss—I'm reachin' fer yer! Well th' missis there," motioning with his thumb to Miss Von Bonhorst, "gives me me orders yisterday ter fix up old man Solomon's leak, which wasn't no lead pipe cinch seein's how I tugged me liver out all day and wit'out me lunch at dat, havin' fergot it in me haste ter do her biddin'. So jist nachurally, bein' somewhat punk when me quittin' time comes I felt fer th' price of er schooner on th' "L," thinkin' ter reach Hungry Joe's quick. Bein' ter th' shoddy on looks I stands in th' bunch on th' platform, when sudden and familiar like I feels er touch on me shoulder, and me friend Essingham says: 'Well, Mac,' says he, 'I want yer.' 'Fer what,' says I. 'Oh, fer a look over in the mornin',' says he, which bein' customary wouldn't ha' queered me only fer loosin' out down't Joe's. 'Is it so long fer me then?' says I. 'Maybe,' says he, so it's me ter gamble along nice and quiet like. Well, nothin' was doin' in th' round up last night, so it was a bum bunch of stiffs waitin' downstairs dis mornin' fer line up. Sudden like th' telephone buzzes and th' sergeant sings out fer Essingham, who was apologizin' ter me fer th' trouble he took ter bring me in. Not havin' no friends in th' bunch I amuses meself listenin' ter his gabfest. 'Hello!' says he. 'Yes, I'm Essingham—*Mister* Essingham,' which I knows by dat he must've chanct onter a gent. 'Oh, Anholt,' says he; 'no, I ain't got nothin' more ter report,' which nachurally makes me sit up not wantin' ter miss nothin' after him sayin' dat. But th' bull was wise and spieled low like so's all I could lift was his sayin' somethin' about th' Herald and

some personal wot was in it. Well, we did our little act upstairs and when th' bulls got tired lookin' Essingham takes me down and says, 'Get ter 'ell out o' here!' says he, w'ich bein' somewhat late already, I skidood. Well, jist nachurally I turns me lamps on th' paper, w'ich if it was me, Boss, I'd put th' editor er guy wot runs it on th' terboggan slide fer fair."

"It isn't the tool I want, Bob," replied Anholt; "It's the hand that uses it. You've done me a real big service, boy," grasping the other's hand, "and I thank you for it. Now go after that job at Solomon's place and finish it—and say, Bob! we'll both keep our nerve up, won't we?"

"Fergit it—that's er pipe!" and with a touch of dignity observable by one at least, the young fellow unlatched the railing gate and hurried to his work.

Walking over to Miss Von Bonhorst, Anholt handed her the paper, saying: "Here's an interesting item."

"Oh! that," she replied, "I noticed it coming down this morning and showed it to some of the clerks. We had a good laugh over it."

"Yes, it *is* funny," he retorted, sarcastically. "And as a joke, admirably supplemented by your witty idea of advertising it to the office force."

"I told them," she explained, "how your friend had intended inserting it last week as an April fool joke and we wondered, since the paper published it a week too late, whether the joke was on your friend, the newspaper, or yourself."

"Miss Von Bonhorst, I should like for one full moment to take you by the hand." He reached for the paper, adding: "Pray, accept my apology and thanks. Verily, diplomacy is but another name for woman!"

Later in the day, the special messenger who had carried a note from him to Storey, returned with a reply. It read:

"My dear Anholt:—Have just caught Bishop on the 'phone. We will handle Essingham. In the meantime have the enclosed inserted in tomorrow's Herald. It will counteract the effects of the one today, which will not be repeated. I am uncharitable enough to believe Withers had a hand in this. Anyhow, I propose dropping in on Hope later and chatting with him concerning it. Come up tomorrow night.

Yours, STOREY."

The enclosed copy for the personal was read with interest by Anholt:

"Anson Van Anholt, thirty years of age, 5 feet 11½ inches in height, weight about 180 pounds, black hair, tinged with gray; dark brown eyes, and smooth shaven, when last seen, is chief legatee under his uncle's will. In order to prevent publicity regarding the bequests it will be necessary to ascertain his address within the next thirty days. Anybody notifying Mr. Anholt of this advertisement or reporting his whereabouts to the undersigned will be liberally rewarded. Address E 180, Herald, Downtown."

"It may be all right," commented the man referred to in the copy, "and I'll put it in because Storey advises it. But it looks to me like planting seeds for another rattling lot of trouble."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Funny personals, those," remarked Emerson, tossing the Heralds on the table. "By the same token, too, it strikes me harder than ever that Anholt is a funny kind of a jigger."

"He's a bully good fellow," retorted Powers, warmly. "There's a lot of knocking going on around here that ought to be stopped," he added, glancing at the half dozen other members of the League's Employment Committee who were lounging in the secretary's office preparatory to holding their monthly meeting, as if challenging contradiction.

"I don't know anything about that," replied the first speaker, "but he's certainly laid himself open to conjecture in several instances lately, instancing his run in with Withers the other night for one."

"Yes, because he didn't choose to ignore the inference in Withers' words. Suppose our Christmas contribution did go to him. He's paid it back, hasn't he, when it wasn't expected or desired? I don't know anything about his troubles and I don't know anything about these advertisements, and what's more I'm not trying to guess; but he's a brave, tender hearted chap, and I like him." Powers, who had been standing, pulled a chair up with a jerk. "And another thing," he added aggressively, "He's Stanley Hope's friend, and that means he's a friend of mine." Another savage pull on the chair and he dropped into it with a defiant gesture.

"You misinterpret Emerson's words, Powers," interposed Cunningham, whose conciliatory voice was habitually intervening at the ominous moment. "These personals, taken conjointly with the incidents referred to have only developed a natural feeling of interest in Anholt's past in his mind, as I'm frank to confess they have in my own."

"Which means, I suppose," said Powers, "that until he decides to unbosom himself to you fellows, you'll build with your conjectures any kind of a history you choose."

"You're way off," retorted Emerson, with a show of spirit. "If Anholt has swallowed his pill, he's got my respect for the fight he's putting up; but I'll tell you this; it would help his friends—and I'm one regardless of your insinuation—if they had some actual data on which to base a refutation of the innuendoes and reports flying around."

"All of which reports," returned Powers, "boiled down simply mean that he has answered for some mistake to the law, while the rest of us, fortunately, are only obliged to do so to whatever conscience we happen to possess. I'm tired of seeing a lot of our fellows hiding their moral slip-ups behind the bulletin board of somebody else's misfortunes. Anholt doesn't owe us anything, but we're running up a charge account against ourselves and he's chief creditor. Did we ever help a fellow to a job before he came? If we did, I never heard about it. Last month we found employment for seventy-six men. Who started the idea? Anholt. He stands over here at the corner handing out our meeting cards on Sunday afternoons—and I've known him to get out of a sick bed to do it—because the rest of us are too almighty good for the job. I'll warrant he's got more poor devils on his list now, trying to put them on their feet, than the bunch of us put together—yes, twice over."

"Oh! but you can overdo anything," broke in Cruishank, a mite of humanity, with spare light hair parted in the middle with geometrical precision, and a delicate, carefully nurtured moustache, modelled, in so far as its strength would permit, on the bristling style affected by the German Emperor. "Dixon says he's introducing a raft of nondescripts down at his office, headed by a Spanish woman with a Dutch name, and——."

"That'll do you, Cruishank!" interrupted Powers with an attitude and tone causing the other to cower like a whipped hound. "Dixon never referred to Anholt's hiring of anybody down there except the

time we had the matter of establishing our employment department up, and then he spoke in way of endorsement. Yes, and come to think of it, you sprung the question yourself or he wouldn't have said anything. You're a dirty little shrimp, Cruishank, and I don't mind telling you so."

"Oh! come now, Powers," whined the little fellow, with a sickly grin and extending a hand which the other refused to touch.

"Don't talk to me!" exclaimed Anholt's defender, with an expression of disgust that penetrated even Cruishank's unusually obtuse brain. The latter's inherited wealth had secured for him a certain kind of position in the League, but his disposition was of a character earning him nothing but the thinly veiled contempt of the other members. Not the least of the changes being effected by the recently installed management was the gradual elimination of a policy so questionable as to permit men of this stamp to do nominal service on the standing committees.

Ignoring Cruishank's remark and Powers' heated reply, Simpson, a theological seminary student—once declared by somebody to be a "dead ringer," minus years, for Withers—took occasion to say: "I don't think anybody here means to question Mr. Anholt's works or motives. For myself, aside from his smoking and drinking——."

"Oh, bosh! Simpson," said Powers. "Seventy-five per cent. of our fellows smoke. The ones that drink differ only from Anholt in the fact that he isn't hypocrite enough to try and hide it. If by doing so, I could get as much gray matter in my cranium as he has behind one ear, I'd take to drink myself. Suppose he does take a cocktail, or even more a day; what have we got to do with it? If this critical bunch will take a tip from me they'll follow Anholt more and rumor less. I'm not heavy on philosophy, but I've learned to be suspicious of a man in exact proportion to the amount of suspicion with which he sizes up other men." Reaching for the Heralds he tore them into bits, threw the pieces in the waste paper basket, and assumed his characteristic position of extended legs, crossed hands, and eyes

focused on the ceiling; an attitude understood by his friends to mean, "I'm done; talk of something else."

A short time later the subject of their argument entered, accompanied by Patterson, thereby preventing any recurrence to the topic, and the meeting—which strangely enough was dominated by the man they had so critically discussed—was productive of harmony, clearer understanding and results.

CHAPTER IX.

"Your protegé, I am afraid, is in trouble this morning."

"What! Bob—again?" and Anholt, in the act of unlocking his desk, paused and looked inquiringly at Miss Von Bonhorst.

"His piscatorial proclivities and, I am afraid, a little lapse from the prohibition route, turned his head last night. He's coming back to tell you about it. Indeed, if it wasn't so funny, I'd try to tell you myself."

"It must be," he replied drily, "when a woman hesitates to talk. I wonder, though, if your merriment really would preclude your treating me to an intelligent synopsis of the joke. If Bob ever starts his recitation, you may as well take the clerks on a picnic excursion. It'll mean a day off for anybody near enough to hear." He glanced hastily through the mail, and seeing nothing of sufficient importance to require his immediate attention, he turned again to the woman, saying, "What *is* it, anyhow?"

"I'll try," she said, "but it's just too funny. You know he drew his money last night, and it seems he stopped along the way somewhere to pay a saloon bill he said they'd been pushing him for."

"Yes, I know," Anholt broke in savagely. "Jimmy O'Rourke's. I told him to forget it and keep away from there."

"Anyhow," she continued, "he did go, and says the bartender was so astonished at getting the money that he forgot himself and invited Bob to drink, which—to use his words—'as bein' between gents, he couldn't in reason turn down.' I suppose, judging from what he said, invitations of this kind imply a reciprocal arrangement with the preponderance of trade in favor of the saloon."

"Marvelous intuition, yours!" commented the man, drumming the desk with his fingers. "One of the funniest stories I ever heard!'

"Your sense of humor is abnormal," she retorted. "I thought the funny part was in what I am going to tell."

Anholt looked at her. "Go ahead," he said. "I suppose he got drunk, lost his money and was kicked out."

"Nothing so comic as all that," she answered. "What he did do was to claim he could catch more fish off O'Connell's Docks than any two men in the bar-room, after somebody had questioned his veracity. Evidently he had wandered off on that twelve-pound salmon trout story of his."

"The fool!" muttered Anholt, in a tone of feigned disgust.

"And the worst of it is," she kept on, "two of the Captain Foster's crew—you know the boat that makes fishing excursions to the Banks—were there and they 'joshed' him, as he says, until he actually bet he could do it. I think they gave him odds—do you call it?—and he deposited all he had left—a little over thirty dollars—with the stakeholder. They're going to have the contest Sunday afternoon. Poor fellow! He says nobody was ever known to catch even a minnow over there."

"Well, those fellows ought to, since they don't appear to experience any trouble in catching suckers on dry land. I wonder what in Heaven's name is the matter with him, anyhow?" he added, in a voice prophetic of a warm welcome both to Bob and to his story. "I suppose next month he'll be inaugurating a contest for picking up lost reputations along Broadway."

"I don't think you ought to censure him. Bob's a good fellow at heart."

"Which," returned Anholt, "is merely the gracious way of referring to a man's asininity. However, I guess it's only a matter of degree with us all. Here, you, Tommy," calling to the office boy, "find out where MacNamara is and tell him I want to see him here at noon." Having given the order, he turned his attention again to the mail, Miss Von Bonhorst having already resumed her task.

At eleven o'clock he left the office, returning shortly before the noon hour struck. Ten minutes later Bob stood before him, his nervous fingers clutching the rim of his second-season hat.

"Well, Bob, so I'm the rummy, eh?"

"Not on yer life, Boss! Yer on, and it's me ter th' woods. On th' level, though, does yer think I meant ter throw yer?"

"What do you expect me to think? Didn't I tell you to keep clear of O'Rourke and his place? Well, you didn't do it, did you?"

"S'help me, I had ter go, Boss. Yer see, here 'tis. Says I, 'Jimmy, is me credit good?' 'Sure, Bob,' says he; 'what'll it be?' And him lettin'

a piker like me throw th' gaff inter him like dat for more'n two weeks. Well, me conscience don't stand fer makin' er fall guy out of no man wot says, 'Mac, help yerself and pay when youse ready.' I ain't broke ter throwin' them wot stands by me, w'ich is a game I sees belongs ter eddication and ter them wot trails after sky pilots. So, says I—"

"All right, Bob," interrupted Anholt, not insensible to the sting unintentionally conveyed in MacNamara's words. "You were honest and paid your bill; weak and got drunk; a blooming fool and went as good as broke——"

"Aw, what'ell if I am? It's nachural, ain't it? And Jimmy says: 'Mac, he's on the level, dat guy is.' Dat's wort' somethin', ain't it? Whacher want ter holler fer, anyhow? I'm here all ter th' good and swingin' me job."

"That's right, Bob. You're square with O'Rourke and back to work. Let it go at that."

"T'anks, Boss; yer white, dat's wot yer are. I tole th' missis, says, I, 'I don't look fer no t'row down from th' Boss, but dere's goin' ter be hell ter pay er me pipe's gone ratty. Anyhow,' says I, 'I ain't no stiff wot wants me wings hammered on all ter oncet. Let 'em grow slow and nachural like. Den maybe dey'll stick.' "

"My boy, you've a faculty for putting some pretty blunt truths, if you are shy sometimes on common sense. Well, what's the answer about this Izaak Walton convention you're to participate in next Sunday? Does it still go?"

"Yer nearin' th' post, Boss; I can't reach yer."

"This sucker conclave; anglers' freeze-out; lunatics' stunt; anything you've a mind to call it."

"What'ell kind er dope's youse smokin', anyhow? Does yer mean me bait t'rowin' contest? Yes? Well, den, jist take it from me, Boss, it's er cinch, dat's er draw. Me loose me cush on dem skates? Not on yer life! Does yer t'ink I wasn't wise when dey called me bluff? W'ich knowin' even tadpoles was leary of th' place I says—havin' th' right—it's us fer O'Connell's Docks. 'Dat's good,' dey says, fallin' fer me game——"

"That means you propose taking them on, I suppose?" and Anholt, as if in more relenting spirit, proffered the other a cigar.

"T'anks"—putting it in his pocket. "Sure I'm goin' ter take 'em on. What! me quit th' game and th' money on th' table? I thought yer knowed me better, Boss."

"That's what I wanted to find out," said Anholt, bringing his feet down with a quick movement and reaching for his pocketbook. "Here, you—here's a century! I want you to place it—in your own name, understand—and get the best odds you can induce the other side to offer. Saturday noon I want you to come in here for further orders. But get that money down, somehow—all of it, mind you, to win. Now skip!"

Disregarding the speaker's last words, Bob turned the bill over and examined it with undisguised curiosity. Then looking up, he said:

"Is dis a josh yer givin' me?"

The answer was a trifle brusque: "I told you to bet it, didn't I? The money's good, if that's what's bothering you."

"Den take it back," replied Bob, endeavoring to thrust the bill in the other's hands. "If yer wanter make er bonfire, blow it fer barrels or somethin' der kids kin see when it's burnin'. Nice big fire dis would make—nit."

"Look here, Bob, I know what I'm doing. Now will you place this for me, or must I do the betting myself?" Anholt meant business—that was clear.

"Honest ter God, Boss! I thought yer was kiddin' me. You're on fer ter fall, all right, but it's up ter youse. Wisht I'd had dis yisterday," he continued, again inspecting the bill. "'Hello, Jimmy,' says I. 'Hello, Mac,' says he. 'Well,' says I, 'I thought, Jimmy, I'd drop in and pay me little bill,' and I flashes th' century. 'Will I keep th' change?' says Jimmy, lookin' sideways like, thinkin' ter see er bull. 'Aw! no,' says I, careless like, 'I'm jist goin' fer ter t'row it ter th' kids and see th' scramble.' 'Well,' says he, 'not bein' er millionaire meself, I dont happen jist ter have th' change. I guess, Mac,' says he, 'it would be less trouble ter youse if yer paid me wid somethin' I knows erbout, and w'ich,' says he, 'a two-plunk size would be erbout der limit, and likewise,' says he, 'yer

wouldn't be so near like er question mark.' W'ich, bein' somethin' to it, Boss, I think maybe yer could hand me dis accordin'."

Anholt, taking the bill, replaced it in his wallet. "On second thought," he said, "I'll place this money myself, Bob."

Five minutes later, when alone, he smiled broadly. "Anholt, old man," he soliloquized, "that's the greatest idea that ever trotted down the pike. If there's only room under that pier," he continued meditatively, "and if I can get Bauman—he's the best diver in the business—to turn the trick, it'll mean the making of Bob. A little business of his own—that's the idea. Nobody to yell at him; nobody to discharge him; nobody to—Gad! there's the plain clothes grafters. If they *should* get next, they'll play him to the limit. Yes, and he's got to steer clear of the dope. Confound it! I wish he'd never touched it. If he ever falls for it again—well, it'll be the wind-up. George Harry! if I can only save him—if I can show the true grain of that lad's character to the world, I'll be entitled to a non-revocable pass to the Golden Gates. Talk about me having a struggle on hand! Why, he's putting up a bigger fight right now, than I'd ever dare to dream about. Think of it! Studying his A B C's at night, and hitting up Mass twice every Sunday, 'so's to get wise,' as he says, 'to bein' a gent what can give some guy a lift,' instead of remaining forever a 'dinky, measly stiff.' Well, well, lad!" as leaning forward, he prepared to use the telephone; "if we can't put the deal through, we'll certainly make the people think that Mardi Gras has shifted its habitat to O'Connell's docks. Hello! Central, give me ———John. I say"—a few seconds later—"who is this? Yes? Is Mr. Bauman there? It is? Glad to hear your voice, Bauman. How about it? Can we work the racket? Hurrah! That's great news! I'll see you tonight, at the Stevens House. So long!" and the neglected cigar reassumed its calm-compelling task.

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There may have been hotter Sabbath afternoons, just as there may have been Sundays when more excitement reigned around the vicinity of O'Connell's Docks; but if the evidence of available records can be trusted, this particular one stands out preeminently among them all; not alone because it marked the extreme limit of man's ability

to withstand a temperature verging on the infernal, but as a substantial proof of his consuming curiosity, and of his unconquerable determination to get out and ascertain just what is going on, regardless of the weather, of personal discomfort, or of time. Of all days, it was the last that any man in normal mental state would choose to satisfy his piscatory bent; as, indeed it would be the last that any self respecting denizen of the deep would select as a fitting time for martyrdom. And if any one unlucky spot in all the sweltering city appeared to bear the brunt of a relentless heat God's wrath more than did another, its location on the Metropolitan map would have been identical with that of the aforesaid Docks. Ordinarily the deserted air marking their appearance on Sunday, stood out in most emphatic contrast to the week day noise and hustle; with the gangs of perspiring, sun-browned laborers and longshoremen kept on a quick and constant move by the shouts of their profane and remorseless bosses. Nor, during the morning hours of this particular day was any sign observable suggesting the unusual. About one o'clock, however, in the afternoon, some enterprising youth might have been seen lugging a board and barrels and other paraphernalia of the kind out on the wharf, and with them erecting, near the extreme eastern limit of the structure, a dispensary for cold soft drinks. Now and then some straggler wandered out as if to inspect the young man's work, but soon discouraged by the intensity of the heat, retreated to the more alluring shelter of the convenient corner saloon. As the afternoon grew apace, these loiterers, gathered either in the room to the rear of the bar—having gained access through the "Family Entrance"—or in the welcoming shade of the ever existent awning outside, discussed with no inconsiderable amount of ardor some matter seemingly of grave moment to them all. In such fragments of their talk as reached the ears of casual passers-by, the names of "Croogan," "Scully" and "MacNamara" held the most conspicuous place. Much in evidence, also, were such descriptive terms as "chump," "fake," "bug-house," "strong arm game," and "graft," and so on down the list of unattractive but expressive slang.

"Dese stiffs," remarked one-eyed Connelly, leaning against the iron railing guarding the basement steps to Jimmy O'Rourke's saloon, "makes me tired. Say, dat guy Mac is buggy—him wid t'irty plunks ter der good and trowin' it at dem grafters. How'd he dope't out ter make er git-a-way wid dat mazuma, and him makin' de try out at t'ree o'clock? Say, it is ter laff!"

"Mac's onter his job, all right, all right," commented an individual whose attire and general air of prosperity, indicated the possession of a more or less steady job. "Fennessy says there's somethin' doin'. He's figgered up there's more'n three hundred cases plunged on Mac, mostly one to five; and that's no lie, either."

"Aw! back up, will yer!" retorted the single eyed speaker. "Youse'd all be comeons only yer shy der dough. Say ——."

A procession of perhaps fifty men, followed by as many boys, had unexpectedly rounded the opposite corner, and were now headed in the direction of O'Connell's Docks—the adults, almost to a man, carrying, instead of wearing their coats and vests, and with cotton handkerchiefs taking the place of uncomfortable and wilted collars. Conspicuous in the party were MacNamara, Croogan and Scully; the first—to the surprise of his acquaintances—looking remarkably well-to-do in a nobby suit of serge and wearing a yachting cap of pure white duck—a cap as yet unsullied by the use of man. Croogan and Scully, his opponents in the coming contest, more mindful both of the weather conditions and of the task confronting them, had discarded all unnecessary apparel, and with slouch hats, time-worn shirts and trousers—Scully alone wearing a pair of dilapidated shoes —looked prepared to win the contest on its merits, or to mete out vengeance in muscular combat if they lost. The balance of the crowd, consisting largely of saloon keepers, bartenders and their hangers-on —most of whom were to some extent financially interested in the outcome — were divided into two readily distinguishable groups, one embracing the MacNamara following; and the other banking its hopes on the proficiency, or luck, of the two men whose vocation lay in this particular field of effort. The procession now, had reached

the wharf, which by this time had begun to assume a gala-air. Small boys fringed its edge, kicking their heels against the wooden piles; while their mothers and sisters, shielded from the sun's torrid rays by umbrellas and parasols of various qualities and hues, gossiped in the manner possible only to women in their sphere of life. That the business acumen of the lad whose assets in trade consisted of lemonade and ginger beer, was not at fault, was evidenced by the rapidly diminishing stock. And now this reckless expenditure of minor coins gave inspiration to a few perspiring individuals of Teutonic cast of countenance, who straightway left the wharf to reappear a short time later with the necessary accoutrements of that peace and harmony assassin—the ubiquitous German Band. With the approach of the contestants and their retinues the maddening program of discord was inaugurated. As the partially recognizable strains of "Hail, the Conquering Hero Comes!" reached the ears of MacNamara, he turned to Mike Fennessy, on his right, and exclaimed:

"What'ell do dey think dis is—a balloon 'cension er a funeral?"

"Well, it ain't no parachute stunt, Mac, and if they make it a funeral you'll be the one a-wearin' flowers when it's over."

"Not on yer life. Look't here Mike, does dis mob think th' bet calls fer me ter trow th' hooks inter fish wot's deaf and can't see? What'ell chanct 've I got ter catch anyting else?"

"You've got as much chance as the others, ain't you?"

"Aw! don't spiel no con ter me like dat, Mike. I'm lookin' ter cop me own dough back, dat's wot; and now wot wid dat pretzel chewin' bunch and th' women and kids, like's not I'll t'row th' wrong end in th' river, and bite th' hook meself."

"Well," offered Fennessy, "you won't be no more daffy than when you sprung your bluff."

"Dat," said Bob, "wasn't no bug-house play. It was er nachural condition."

By this time they had reached that portion of the structure adjacent to the lemonade vender's stand. The principals' partizans

formed a semi-circle facing the edge of the wharf; the open space being reserved for the contestants themselves, and for Fennessy, who by virtue of his position as stake-holder and referee now assumed the duties of spokesman. The crowd had gradually worked itself into a compact mass around the outer edge of the half circle formed by the aristocracy and moneyed interests of the assemblage, with an intention first, of hearing what Fennessy might have to say, and secondly, of keeping an eye on the progress of the ridiculous contest. But five persons in the gathering appeared indifferent to the real object of the occasion, and these five, contented with the devilish noise their instruments produced, gave little heed either to the protests of the crowd or to the angry shouts of Fennessy.

"I'll give some kid a quarter," he yelled in desperation, "if he'll suck a lemon in front of that sauerkraut gang. Where's that cop what called for the reserves?" he added, "have him throw them Dutchmen overboard, somebody."

Whether his breath failed him or reason came to the rescue is inconsequential. Certain it is, that he stopped, mopped his face vigorously with a marvelously decorated handkerchief, and sitting on a box loaned him by the young merchant, waited without further word for the torturing sound to stop. As with all other things, both good and bad, this massacre of a master's work came to an end. The horns were lowered, the smiling mind wreckers looked up in innocent surprise at the manifest lack of appreciation of their strenuous, whole hearted efforts. A half consumed orange struck fairly on the ruddy countenance of the fattest of the five. "Mine Gott!"—a laugh by the people gathered round—comparative silence for a moment—then Fennessy resumed his standing position on the box, and with hat in one hand and handkerchief in the other, commanded silence.

"Ladies and gents," he began. "Under the terms of this try-out, Bob MacNamara bets Tommy Croogan and Pinky Scully that he can catch more fish with hook and line here, in a certain time, than both of them put together. The go will be for an hour and the side havin' the most fish at the end, wins. If nobody don't catch nothin',

then they hit it up for another hour and they'll keep this up until one side or 'nother hooks somethin'. I ask you to give the boys plenty of room and let 'em alone so's no holler can come from the losin' side. Thankin' you one and all for your kind attention——."

"Ladies and gentlemen," somebody shouted. "Meals will be served here daily at the small price of fifteen cents each. Rooms and lodging will be furnished after the first of the month. Special rates to guests staying to see the end of the play."

"What's de matter wid youse?" exclaimed a young fellow known as Sammy the Tout. "Der ain't goin' ter be no endin'. De only fish dese blokes ever seed was dem wot dey gits wid de booze—Holy Moses! Say, dis is fierce!" he added, removing with his finger the rivulets of perspiration coursing down his face.

"Is dat so?" said MacNamara, starting to undo the parcel containing his outfit. "Anyhow, dis ain't no snake contest, w'ich is yer limit, Sammy."

"Wot's dat t' you?" and Sammy shoved his way, with threatening gesture, well up to the open space.

"Nothin', only I'm payin' fer th' fish, see—and say youse——."

"Stow that, Mac! Get busy there—it's three now," and Fennessy, after looking at his watch, shouted to Croogan and Scully: "All right, boys; throw your lines!"

Whether there was anything like a feeling of shame in the minds of the two men who possessed such a decided advantage over MacNamara, both in numbers and experience, is doubtful. There was nothing in the physical appearance or mental make up of either on which to base an assumption of the kind. It *was* evident, however, by the quiet, yet decided manner in which they acted—paying as little attention to the doings of Bob as they did to the gibes and sarcasms of the crowd—that a firm intention of winning possessed their minds. The promptness with which their lines struck the water in response to Fennessy's words helped to confirm one in this belief. MacNamara, who felt it incumbent upon him as a matter of principle to give reply in kind to what he designated "the funny talk" around him, had just exposed the contents of his package

to the gaze of the curious onlookers. Suddenly snickers here and there gave way to one uproarious laugh.

"Pipe de hawser!" shouted a ten year old, dodging out of reach.

"Mac's gone, all right!" said another. He's——."

"Here, what yer t'rowin' us?" broke in Croogan, a tall, burly individual, who, hearing the laughter, had glanced at Bob's outfit and now advanced threateningly toward him. "I t'ought dis was to be a fishin' deal—who in hell said we was goin' to run a lynchin' bee? Here, Pinky," as the other swaggered up; "look at th' rope, and say, if th' hook ain't th' limit! Whacher think this is"—addressing Bob—"a whalin' 'spedition? Mike"—to the referee—"would yer make us stand fer him usin' three hooks?"

"Aw, go back and sit down," his adversary broke in. "Dat's only one hook wid t'ree points, and wot's th' matter wid th' line? Youse two skates playin' aginst me and den welchin' at dat. Put 'em wise, Mike,' and he prepared to cast his line.

Fennessy, looking at the layout, again started laughing. Nor all things considered was it to be wondered at. The line itself, if not of the regulation clothes line type and size, was sufficiently near it to satisfactorily perform, if called upon, the humble duties imposed upon that useful household article. At distances of perhaps, two feet, four sticks of wood, eight inches long, and evidently cut from the handle of a retired broom, were tied securely with ribbons of red and vivid hue. The hook, with three immense curved points—if such a description is intelligible—and covered with pieces of dried eel's skin for bait, might better have been used as anchor for some light tonnage craft, than as a tempter to misguided members of the finny tribe. Such an outfit, together with the disgusted expression on Bob's face as he caught the unflattering comments aimed at him, might well have furnished grounds for doubts as to his sanity. But with conditions so ridiculous, to view the situation with a serious mien was the last thing Fennessy or the crowd could do. After a time however, the referee aided by the torture he was undergoing from the heat, began to feel in less hilarious mood. So it was, that after removing tie and collar—coat and vest having been discarded before he reached the wharf—he stood upon the box again, protected by an umbrella

which assisted him in preserving his equilibrium on the dangerously unstable support.

"There's no kick comin' on that rope," he began; "because a rope's a line, though that doesn't say always that a line's a rope. But about that hook. Is it a hook or is it hooks? A hook is a bend, and there's three bends. But there's only one stem and that's what the line's tied to. Does that make it one hook or three hooks? Now I reason it's like a saloon. A saloon's a room, but a room ain't always a saloon. Likewise, if I got three rooms, which as you all know I've got, is it one saloon or three saloons? Nobody says, 'Let's go to Fennessy's saloons,' does they? That's sense, ain't it? The decision of the referee," he added, "is that it's one hook as MacNamara's got. If Croogan and Pinky don't like it, let 'em go out and git the same. Now," addressing Bob, "for God's sake, go, git busy!"

It is not probable that this logic appealed to either Croogan and Scully or their supporters, but no one was rash enough to openly criticise it. There was, however, a general hurrah of approval from that portion of the crowd whose sympathies were with MacNamara, and a few more sarcastic remarks directed at all three of the participants in the contest. The German Band, discouraged by the lack of interest evidenced in its efforts and by the meagre receipts resulting from a canvass of the assemblage, had ceased to add that terror to the scene, and with the appearance of an added "cop" or two, the gathering resolved itself into a body patiently awaiting the outcome of the piscatorial "go." A full half hour had elapsed since Fennessy had first signalled the men to throw their lines. The crowd had scattered itself about the wharf. Many, disregarding dirt and dust, had seated themselves in groups, shielded from the hot rays of the sun by umbrellas owned or borrowed for the time. Here and there a crap or card game, surreptitiously carried on, afforded some diversion to the players. Fennessy, with a few of his intimates took possession of the boards and barrels of the soft drink vender, who had gone in vain attempt to restock his stand, and with them formed a vantage point from which to watch the fishermen. The latter, who disdained to seek protection from

the sun, sat like statues—except when, now and then, one slapped at some too persistent fly, or cursed the heat, his luck and everything in general.

Suddenly there was a shout. Croogan—in his excitement dropping his pipe in the water—seized his line with frantic grasp. Another gentle pull that told of venturing fish, and then a jerk; the dependable cord was hauled in—hand rapidly passing hand—until the fish was landed, directly in the face of Mike, the referee. It wasn't much of a fish, as Bob remarked in response to the condolence of the men around. "If I'd knowd 'twas minners we was after," he commented, "I'd brought er school along."

"It's a fish, ain't it," said Croogan; "and dat spells cush, don't it?" Then without further to-do he recast his line. Bob said no more. By reason of the extraordinary outfit he was called upon to handle, he was encountering trouble enough. But now—Croogan's line scarce had touched the water—*he* was galvanized into unexpected and astonishing activity. A terrific tug, indicative of a monster of its kind; another one, stronger even than the first, and Bob was on his feet, yelling, pulling, bracing himself for the final effort—an effort which, when made, resulted in nothing more nor less than the capture of a ten pound turtle—genus *Chelonia*—edible, unquestionably. A fish? Well—is there not much after all, occasionally in a name?

More shouts; more hurrahs; more laughter, and the entire crowd, which had remained hedged around them since Croogan's lucky catch, strained and elbowed for a sight of MacNamara's queer haul. With a face bearing the stamp of his intense surprise, Bob turned toward his antagonists.

"Mebbe dis spells cush, too—eh?"

"Yes, and mebbe it don't," retorted Croogan. "When in hell'd turtles git to be fish?" This was a puzzler. MacNamara looked at Fennessy—Fennessy at his cronies, and they in turn at the crowd. "Get a dishinary," somebody suggested. The referee started to nod approval of the idea when Croogan said:

"Dishinary er no dishinary, that turtle's no fish. What'd yer do if yer kid went fer fish and brought this home? Humph! me on th' Banks an' not knowin' th' difference. I——."

"You go, get busy—you fellers—all of you!" commanded Fennessy. "I'll decide this when th' time comes. Like's not Mac will snag a whale next——."

"If he does," said Croogan, "it'll go. A whale's a fish," and with this display of knowledge he returned to his interrupted task. Bob, alternately cursing and communing with himself, grew nervous. That Fennessy would stand for counting the turtle as a fish, he didn't for a minute believe. What Anholt meant by his careful instructions, which had been conscientiously followed, he was totally unable to figure out. "And me," he ruminated, "wid fifteen minutes only ter go. Sammy's next, all right. I'm dippy, dat's a certain."

Here, a boy, pushing his way through the compact mass of humanity, managed to reach the space occupied by the referee and principals. He carried a book; bulky, well worn and evidently of ancient edition. With a look of conscious self-importance he placed it in Fennessy's hands. The latter eyed it suspiciously, examined its outside critically; then opened it and by dint of careful effort found the page he wanted. Then with an appearance of incredulity manifested in his face, and still staring at the definition, he mounted the box for the third time, deprived, by reason of the difficulty he encountered in handling the heavy volume, of the welcome protection of his umbrella.

"I hold here in my hands," he shouted, "Webster's Unabridged Ditionary,* which as you all knows, is the only goods when it comes to dealin' out straight dope about what's what. Now, I look up turtle and what does it say? 'A turtle,' it says, 'is a bird'—'a gall'—what'n hell you all laffin' about?"

"Oh, Lord!—and me fishin' fer birds in th' East River!" exclaimed Bob. "Dat's th' limit, fer fair, Mike."

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*Homewood Publishing Company, Chicago. Edition undated.

"Look here, Fennessy," said Billy Summers, with a sympathetic air, "what you need is the water wagon and—rest. You'll be makin' that turtle into ham and eggs before you quit."

"Will you wise guys work to th' rear until I'm through?" shouted the embarrassed referee. "That's th' first thing it says. Second, it says, 'also the name given to the common tor'—tort—t-o-r-t-o-i-s-e-. I'm spellin' it so's you'll know. It's a cinch," he added, "it can't be a fish because first this here book says it's a bird and second it's a tor-tortus."

"Supposin' yer look fer dat turtus, Mike," suggested MacNamara. "Mebbe it'll turn out ter be er keg o' lager 'r a jag."

"That's the stuff, Fennessy," said Summers, facetiously. "It's a nice, cool, pleasant kind of day to chase that turtle through the book. Let's hear how many kinds of things he is anyhow."

Ignoring the remarks of the would-be humorists around him, the referee continued turning the pages with his dripping hands, occasionally glancing at the definition just read, in order to keep the proper spelling in his mind. Finally he caught the word he sought. As before, he read it over to himself; stared at it, and mopped his face with handkerchief clutched in one hand, while balancing the book in the other.

"Never havin' done no college stunts," he began, "I'm likely to fall down on givin' this right and proper. So askin' your pardon in advance I'll read what the ditionary says is a tortus. First, it says it's 'an animal with a shell,' meanin', I guess, a lobster; and down below it says it's 'a mil-i-tary defense used by the ancients.' I——"

"Is that all?" asked Summers. "I thought maybe it was a battleship or the Seventh Regiment Band."

"Yes, that's all!" roared Fennessy, stepping down. "What more do you want? A turtle is a bird and a tortus, and a tortus is an animal, and a fort, and a lobster—havin' a shell on't—or maybe it's a crab, but it ain't no fish, that's a cinch."

"How do you know?" queried Summers. "Did you look animal up?"

"Aw, let 'im go," said Bob, reseating himself. "Don't me finish come in less'n five minutes? Dat's—Great Mother o' Mary," he shouted, grabbing at his line. "Here, you Mike—here—grab dis—what th'—pull,

you geezer, pull—nab her—she's goin'—help, youse fellers—heave—dat's th' stuff—Oh! does I win—is th' dough mine? Hey rube—you—Croogan!"

Three fish lay on the wharf, and they were fish—about that there could be no sort of doubt. Salmon trout—all of them, and none would tip the scales at less than seven pounds—the last thing any man would expect to catch by hook and line, at such a place and on such a day as this. Less lively than one might have looked for, they yet had put to test the combined strength of three or four strong men to pull them in. It appeared, indeed, as if some venturesome school of fish had worked their way up to the dock and at the sight of Bob's queer hook—or hooks—had jumped in unison to grab the bait. With electric speed, news of the phenomenal catch spread through the gathered multitude. Surging forward in one excited, shouting mob, they filled the space hitherto reserved for the contestants and Fennessy, who were in imminent danger of being pushed entirely over the wharf's edge. Jumping upon the box, and steadied by the men surrounding him, Mike shouted—meanwhile holding one of the fish aloft—"Back up there, back up, you farmers! D'you want to drown the bunch? Here's one of 'em. Look at it, but stop your shovin'—stop—what'n——."

Fennessy had disappeared; the box had ended its existence with a crash and to the music of some of the most lurid and picturesque oaths ever heard upon a spot where cursing had long been recognized as an art. MacNamara, grabbing the fish, threw them over the heads of the unreasoning crowd to different points upon the wharf. The result was magical. Instantly the onslaught ceased and the rabble, turning, divided itself into three howling, fighting groups. A fish, snatched up by one, was as suddenly grabbed from his hands by another, who in turn—obliged to defend himself against overwhelming odds—surrendered the prize to a third. The women, hitherto without direct interest in the proceedings, now came into their own. The spirit of the bargain counter came to life. Regardless of damage done to dress, or hat, or shoes, each fought, and shrieked, and trampled on the other, as if beyond all other things that heart could crave, the owning of that fish stood paramount. Here and there some

perspiring policeman shoved his way into the mob, determined to put—by confiscation of the fish—an ending to the uproar. Then, as he neared his objective point, a sharper tussle than before—a cry, and the innocent cause of all the trouble was thrown to another spot, there to become the center of a still more noisy scramble.

While all of this was going on, Fennessy stood the central figure in a group where hot spoken words so far had held the place of action. He had declared the contest ended two minutes after Bob had made his catch; a decision which neither Croogan, Scully, nor their backers—ranged along beside them—would admit was just.

"That won't go for a minute, Mike," said Jimmy O'Rourke, who stood to loose a not inconsequential sum. "Mac caught the fish and that's dead sure, but he caught 'em too late. Your clock needs windin' is all. Nobody here is askin' favors, but we can't stand for no throw-down like that."

"Look here, Jimmy!" replied Fennessy, "Your're nix as a welcher. It ain't your class of spiel. MacNamara wins, and that goes—so fergit it! The winners can have their long green when they calls for it. I'm done," and turning, he walked away accompanied by a number of his friends.

Croogan, with an oath, addressed his henchmen: "What! is yer goin' to stand fer this holdup, without givin' 'em no comeback? This faker," he continued, advancing on MacNamara, "don't make no such git-a-way like that——."

"Mebbe yer t'ink ter put er stop on't!" retorted Bob.

"Oh, drop it, Croogan!" said O'Rourke. "I don't like this hand Mike dealt us myself, but he's the doctor and we got to stand fer it. It's mè fer the shade." With which remark expressing his resignation he followed the example set by Fennessy.

"Not on yer life, Jimmy!" shouted Croogan after him, encouraged by the mutterings and sympathetic attitude of the men around him. "We got ours handed us and here's where we gives these stiffs what's comin' to 'em. Get 'em, boys; give 'em hell!" Simultaneously with the cry he made a spring at MacNamara, while a half dozen others began a concerted attack on the few remaining adherents of Bob—the rest having either left the wharf altogether or mingled with the excited groups in warfare over

the disputed fish. The words and action of Croogan were not unexpected by either Bob or his friends, nor were they unwilling for the encounter. They knew nothing of that discretion which has been defined as the better part of valor, but they all were graduates of a school that makes the turning of one's back the one unpardonable offense. MacNamara, in dodging, caught the blow of Croogan on his arm, stumbling at the same time to the floor. Like a flash, the other—hand encirc'ed with brass knuckles—was upon him. Bob, glancing at his followers, realized that struggling as they were, he could expect no assistance from that source. With a quick movement he caught the wrist of his antagonist—a twist—a trick, well learned—a supreme effort and his disgruntled adversary, gasping under the pressure of MacNamara's fingers about his throat, lay like a frightened animal, awaiting opportunity to escape.

"Aw! yer dirty cur," Bob shouted at him, meanwhile tightening his hold; "I oughter choke yer, dat's——."

"Hey, Mac!—lookout—dodge!" and with a quick glance upward he discovered the lithe, wiry form of Scully—opened knife in hand—preparing to jump at his back. Before he could move the fellow was upon him; then, up went his hand, staying—in the nick of time—the downward progress of the blade. With his other hand, now loosened from the throat of Croogan, he reached around, caught Scully by the leg, and with apparently miraculous strength, born of his desperate situation, struggled to his feet. Before the half unconscious figure at his feet could take advantage of the opportunity presented to pull him down again, Bob stepped beyond his reach. Again a startling cry—"Skidoo, the cops!" and the other combatants in the fray, with a rapidity inconceivable to one who missed the sight, became, instead of battling enemies, seemingly friendly, if somewhat bruised and bleeding, spectators of the fight MacNamara was putting up. The latter, burdened with the struggling, murderous thug upon his back, failed to observe the six approaching blue-coats—part of the reserve. With a movement so quick as to be almost imperceptible, his hand shot from Scully's leg and caught the free hand jabbing at his face. Now he held both wrists firmly in his grasp. He glanced at Croogan and saw him, in fear of the nearing officers, replace

a murderous looking knife within his clothes. He staggered under his burden to the wharf's edge, steadied himself, and then, with a marvelous display of muscular power—a feat that to this day is talked about by those who saw it done—bent himself forward with an action so unexpected and rapid as to cause Scully, unable to save himself, to shoot forward with an impetus sending him over the pile-work into the waters far below. Scarce had the "plunk" telling of his late assailant's dive reached MacNamara's ears, when a heavy hand placed on his shoulder advised him of the immediate presence of the police. At the same time Croogan, with a face convulsed with sudden terror, cried out:

"Oh! fer the sake of God—Pinky's done, and wi'd me money, too. Save im, somebody, can't yer—what in hell yer doin'? I tell yer he can't swim."

"Aw, what's eatin' yer?" said Bob. "Him on th' Banks and not wise ter th' wet——."

"I tell yer," wailed Croogan, "Pinky's gone. He can't swim no more'n he kin fly."

"Den it's up ter me!" Like a flash MacNamara whirled around; whipped his fist straight to the chin of the officer at his left and before the latter, with a groan that told of seeing starry skies, had touched the floor, his prisoner had leaped across the wharf, hesitated only long enough to mark the spot where Scully sank, and then—dived to save the man who a minute earlier had threatened him with death.

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"My friend," remarked the Rev Melville Storey, after Anholt, extended comfortably on a leather couch in the minister's library, had finished his recital of the day's developments; "in the advocacy of a worthy cause, the spectacular, I have observed, becomes a most formidable antagonist; its mission being, apparently, not so much the opposing of the object one has in view, as the bringing about of complications rendering the situation more deplorable than it was before. As a scenic display, your creation today reflects credit on your ingenuity. As a proof of your good intentions, it is indisputable. As a manifestation of ordinary common sense, in

view of the present predicament of MacNamara, and considering the narrow margin by which he escaped becoming the murderer of that fellow Scully—well, I should say, the available evidence is, to put it mildly, of a somewhat non-conclusive kind."

"And as to the money won—the ethics, you understand, of using it in Bob's behalf?"

"Friend Anholt, is a reply needed?" and the big fellow continued gazing at the fire, while the other, sighing, closed his eyes—and thought.

CHAPTER X.

"There's one thing certain," remarked Dixon to Anholt the next morning, with a final glance at the illustration in the paper he was holding, "MacNamara's furnishing this office a corking lot of doubtful advertising."

"Yes, I think we'd better let him go," replied the other indifferently.

"I don't mean that, exactly; if you think he'll straighten out—but you know how Carter is——"

"Yes, I know," said Anholt. "It's that reason, among others, inducing my favoring getting another man for Bob's work. I'm not at all discouraged, understand; but as a matter of fact I imagine he can do better by leaving us—to tell the truth, I'm sure of it."

"I don't see how you figure that out. We've been pretty decent to him," returned the firm's active head, rising. "Do as you like, though; only keep your eyes on him wherever he goes."

With an acquiescent nod from his manager, Dixon entered his private office, closed the door, and presumably dispatched all further thought of the matter from his mind. Anholt, looking around, discovered Miss Von Bonhorst eyeing him with a quizzical air.

"Oh, I know!" he exclaimed, as if endeavoring to anticipate her words. "The papers are full of it. Salmon trout are so numerous in the East River they're impeding navigation, and MacNamara, their discoverer, is on the list for a Carnegie medal—even," he added, "if he is in jail."

"But he isn't" she replied. "He's been bailed out and is scrubbing out the flat the Fitzgeralds vacated Saturday."

"Well, that's a little better," he said, curtly. Then to himself: "Dear, brave Bob! There's more of real nobility in you than half the sleek and smooth-tongued hypocrites that preach Christ's law possess."

The woman still regarded him with a half questioning, half pensive look. "Mr. Anholt," she said, "don't you know you can't fool me a bit? You're as pleased over Bob's performance as a mother over her babe's first tooth.

I really do believe if it hadn't been for you he never would have caught those fish at all."

"Your estimate is more flattering than logical," he replied. "Please remember I'm neither a magician nor possessed of superhuman powers."

"Oh, if you only wouldn't try to appear the cynic so!" she answered, leaning toward him with an imploring manner. "When I think how kind you are, and how much good you do, and—what you've done for me——"

"Please do me one real favor," he exclaimed with an appearance of irritation, "and don't make reference to that last again. I deserve as much credit for anything I've done as a hungry dog does for grabbing at a bone. The more I figure it out"—with a savage jab of his pen—"the less I think I'm worth my salt."

"It's your heart," she responded softly. "It's so much larger than your means, and that," she continued with a scarcely audible sigh, "so often leads to danger."

He gazed reflectively at the inkwell before him. "I suppose—I almost fear," he returned in low and measured words, "you're more than half way to the truth. Lucky Hope!" he added as if to himself, and resumed his writing with an air precluding further words.

In himself, Anholt found a subject for disquieting doubt. Behind the veneer of a brilliant personality he recognized the inherent weaknesses of his nature. With motives exempt from any element of personal gain; with ends in view that in themselves must operate toward the welfare of the ones he chose to serve, he acted under impulses chafing at delay, and in his progress to the goal frequently spread the seeds resulting in a harvest of dark penalties for himself. In subordinating the means to the ends, the finale frequently showed his course as giving birth to evils more menacing than the danger he had striven to remove. With a near approach to rashness he attacked the spectre of other men's misfortunes, usually with promises of substantial aid, and more loyal to their interests than to his own, incurred a steadily increasing load of obligations for monetary advances made him and used in their behalf. Nor did the least of the perils threatening him lie in his anxiety and determination to repay these loans promptly on the day of their maturity. In this honesty of purpose

lay the opportunity for the most dangerous factors in the makeup of the man to play their part. Once possessed of a fortune accumulated with a speed exceeded only by the rapidity with which it had been lost; once the subject of experience proving the safety and permanency of one's resources dependent largely on the method of their acquisition; once the victim of an evanescent prosperity built upon fallacious grounds, the man had still to fight the germ of a disease that, lying dormant in his breast, required alone the pressure of financial need to rouse it into life. Like a good ship bound with its precious cargo for a famine-stricken port, and under incompetent command about to run upon the shoals when the voyage seemed complete, Anholt found himself verging to the shore that both Hope, his friend, and his own experience had warned him most to fear. Still denied the comfort and restraining counsel of a wife whose coming, sickness had from time to time delayed, he retained the funds received from Hope, and more than once had ventured part in some small real estate transaction promising quick results—transactions, too many of which were due to his utilization of confidential information passing through his hands, and resulting frequently in the loss of profits by a client —through the latter's ignorance of the truth—in order that Anholt himself might make a little gain; transactions that were ethically unsound, however far they may have been within the law; transactions which neither Stanley Hope nor any honest man would care to have his name associated with, regardless of the ends to be accomplished through the money made. And with it all the man found that the profits realized were too inadequate for a thorough test of the policy he had planned. The well of human woes is deep and the ripples from a few crumbs cast here and there at random count but little in the depths below. And thus it was that Anholt, stirred by the silent appeal of a world he knew so well; limited in his activities in its behalf by reason of his restricted means; taught by personal experience the possibility of fortunes rapidly acquired, and ever watchful of the end with too little consideration for the methods used, had right good cause for anxious thoughts. To reach by slow and cautious steps the vantage ground of a secure and ample competence—a point from which, like Stanley Hope, he could wage his philanthropical cam-

paign without regard to cost—was to him a process intolerable. Generous, unselfish and impulsive, he was ever adding to his own great burden while lifting the load from another's back. And of all men he alone had full cognizance of the hazard of his course.

As the hours wore on his normal and more cheerful spirit put to rout the sober, analytical mood that signalized his introduction to the day; and if, at noon, when the clerks had gone to luncheon, his voice was low in conversation with a sturdy, sun-browned individual seated near his desk, the sparkle of his eyes and the shaking of his body in merriment only partially suppressed, gave ample evidence of his temporary exemption from both presentiments and fears. Shortly after the last clerk had passed through the corridor into the street, another figure entered, walked toward the railing, paused, and hat in hand waited for Anholt's recognition.

"Hello, Bob!" rang out the cheery voice. "Come in! Above all men you're the one I want to see just now."

"T'anks, Boss! Yer see," as he opened the gate and approached the seated men, "I says ter meself it's about time dat——"

"Look here, Bob," Anholt interrupted, stretching out his hand and touching the other's arm as if to restrain him from further speech, "I want you to do me just one favor now. Listen to what I'm going to say, do what I ask you, and then get out without a word. Is it a go?"

"Dat's me, Boss. I'm listenin'."

"Good! Now to business. In this envelope, Bob"—thrusting a bulky parcel in the young fellow's hand—"is exactly four hundred and eighty dollars—winnings on the deal you put through yesterday. To this gentleman"—motioning to the broad-chested man in the chair—"you are indebted fifty dollars for substantial services rendered, and seven more for live and active salmon trout furnished on your account. I wish you'd pay him now. Gentlemen, shake hands. Mr. MacNamara, this is Mr. Bauman, my friend, and the best-known diver on the Atlantic coast."

Bob paid the bill, then looked at Anholt. "Boss, kin I spiel fer jist a minute?"

"Not a word, Bob," and he raised a warning finger. "Along this line I want you now and ever after to keep a silent head. Now, lad if that cigar stand still remains for sale, go out and buy it quick. Then come and see me Sunday. You've wisdom far beyond your years. I shan't say any more, except"—he stood up and seizing the other firmly by the hand, looked him squarely in the eyes—"except, my boy, I trust you."

Something warm and moist fell on Anholt's wrist. A sound, suspiciously like a sob, reached his ear. Then he turned to his chair. Bob, faithful to his promise, left them both without a word.

That evening Anholt sat in his favorite restaurant slowly munching a roll. "I think," he observed to himself, "since I can't have any George Goulet, I'll try a little Cliquot in honor of Bob's evolution into a man of affairs." Two minutes later the decision was recalled. Glancing down the page of the evening paper propped up against the sugar bowl, his eyes fell upon the following bit of philosophy:

"Noways you take it does it pay to bet your wad. If the chances are ag'in you, you're a sucker. If they're hoss and hoss, you're jist an ordinary fool. If you've got a dead sure thing, then you're a low-down, onery thief, and that's all there is about it."

CHAPTER XI.

Anholt, attired in a comfortable if somewhat startling hued suit of soft pajamas, had finished his letter. With a smothered imprecation induced by the discomfort of a torrid night, he reached toward the gas-jet, utilized the flame as a lighter for his half consumed cigar, then turned it out, rested his slippered extremities on the window-sill, and with a chuckle of self-satisfaction lost himself in reverie. In the vernacular of the day, he had "hit it right." Less than a month before some client of his house, in need of ready cash, had offered for sale a small, triangular piece of land located in a thriving business section of the Borough of the Bronx. This plot of ground, less than five feet each on base and sides, had been part and parcel of a goodly sized lot condemned by law to confiscation for the purpose of widening the adjacent thoroughfare. Too small for any business purpose that would justify the payment of anything more than a nominal rent, it had proved an unwieldly, albeit small, white elephant on its owner's hands. The mind of Anholt—omnivorous reader that he was—had reverted like a flash to a practically forgotten ordinance yet in force. With small ado he made an offer on his own behalf; received a prompt acceptance, and for a trivial sum, became the owner of the plat.

"I figure now," he had said, replying to Dixon's slightly caustic comment on the transaction, "that in real estate as in most other things, one's opportunities increase in scope with his knowledge of his trade. You say I've tied my money up in something less than twelve square feet of ground. Please recall that side-walks there are exactly twelve feet wide, and that by law I have the right to excavate quite even with the curb. If my arithmetic is right, and based upon the outline of this bit of land, I've got with entrance space deducted, about three hundred feet of rentable, good paying earth." Five minutes later he paused in his inspection of the balance sheet before him. "I wonder," he reflected, "if Dixon thinks—I

wonder if I should have put him wise, and given him, as my employer, another chance to take that offer up himself."

Today, the firm had taken the property off his hands, and if, after seriously considering the ethics of his course, his mental equipoise seemed just a bit disturbed, he found no small degree of solace in the profit realized.

And now another matter, predestined to eventuate in a grave crisis in his life, had beckoned him with tempter's hand, and with glittering possibilities held up in vivid contrast to the unsatisfactory now, had compelled his serious consideration of its claims—a condition of his mind, on which you or I who know the man, could safely base our prophesy of his eventual surrender.

In the waters of the Caribbean Sea, and scattered here and there amidst the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean lie islands destitute of vegetable life. Rich in phosphates, and in guano deposited through centuries of sea birds' habitation, they remain vast warehouses of untold wealth—the reserve stores of nature, held against the time when man's onward rush shall have robbed the soil of life. Unto this day but few of these islands—and those far down along the wild Peruvian coast—have yielded any portion of their fabulous resources to the growing demands of honest trade. Nor yet has the unsatiable appetite of our modern commercialism's thick skinned vampires been tempted by the gold encrusted opportunity presented by this wonderful mint, inexhaustible as it would seem to be. In the middle of the nineteenth century, under the first "Guano Laws" enacted by the American Congress, provision was made whereby American citizens, importing this article into ports of the United States, in vessels flying the Stars and Stripes, would be granted protection by the government in working the deposits—providing also, among other conditions, that only the discoverer of the islands, his heirs or assigns, working under a bond filed with the State Department, should be the subjects of this government's particular solicitude. Revised and amended as these laws have been, from time to time, they remain to all intents and purposes the same as when first

passed. Romance upon romance, embodying all the elements of tragedy, comedy and melodrama, might well be woven around the history of these islands since that time. The archives of the State Department and the files of newspapers for a full half century or more teem with data of the kind. As time progressed, the ownership—so called—of the guano rights, descended from the many to the few. Here and there an individual, for lack of means, unable either to work his grant or to successfully contest another's claims, sold out his interests to some small corporation controlling other rights, and the latter in its turn, released its holdings to a centralized and dominant control. In time, this organization, richer in assurance than in cash, became defunct; its charter lapsed; some one stockholder, more provident than the others, appropriated to himself such assets as it had, and thus we see the richest single industry in all the great, wide world, tied up in some few descendants' hands; or, if not totally within their ownership, at least so placed as to require the conjoined efforts of our State officials and skilled interpreters of international law to find just where clear title to the grants is vested.

And now by reason of the strange fatality which mocked and humored Anholt at its will, we find him holding by right of option the key to full possession of this wealth. Brought by the merest accident in personal touch with the representative of the —assumed— surviving heirs, and impressing him by the force of a personality that inspired all men with confidence and regard, he learned in confidence the salient points on which to base his campaign for the acquisition of whatever rights the other's principals possessed. Tonight, through the agency of his profits derived from disposing of his property in the Bronx, he owned beyond all possibility of recall a four months' option on these islands in the seas.

Such, then, was the situation holding his mind in bond tonight and furnishing cause for fancy's wild, fantastic flights.

"If I can float this thing"—communing with himself. "If I can ever make this go, I'll show this world a species of philanthropy that will cause a big revision in man's estimate of man. Maybe Storey,

Bishop and myself won't test our theories in a way to make the gods sit up and listen! And there's Dorothy—blessed little one! George, how I wish I had her here tonight!" Lowering his feet, he stood up; took her picture from the wall as he had done night after night since first he placed it there; gazed upon it—in the light reflected from the starry sky; kissed it with a passion telling more than any words of a love so infinitely great as to render infinitesimal, by comparison, the frailties and strange ambitions of his mind.

"If ever we get up again, we'll stay there dear; and when you've reached my side, we'll never, never in the life God gives us time to love, be found apart again. Oh, Dorothy! Dorothy—my own—my darling wife!" he continued in a voice broken with the strong emotion urging him to speak. "Don't you know I need you—need you now? Who but you can understand? Who but you can guide, and counsel and protect me now? How long—Oh God—must I contend alone against temptations; against blackmailing curs; against concerted action by the powers of Hell? What—who is there can tell me—have I done, deserving the vengeance of a just, forgiving Christ?" He flung the burning stub of his cigar far into the street. "Oh, Bah!" he cried; "Justice or forgiveness—where can they be found in Christ or man?" He paced the room with rapid strides. "I don't believe"—muttering and striking in the air with his clenched hands—"I don't believe a good Christ ever lived; I don't believe that mercy ever strayed a meter from the throne of God—God—I don't believe in God! I don't believe that any decent trait ascribed to Heaven, or its church, or its white faced sycophants, ever found abiding place with or near the lot of them! I don't believe a man can find anywhere, unless it be in the under world, an ounce of sympathy, or friends, or help! I don't——"

He had stopped suddenly—his hands dropping by his side. Bending over he picked up the photograph of his wife—his face relaxing in a faint and contemptuous smile.

"You simpering idiot!" he muttered. "You renegade! to talk like that, and then dare to rest your eyes upon the picture of *her* face;

upon the image of the best, and purest, and divine in life! *You*, thriving on the charity of a friend as true as Hope! *You*, the right hand man of Storey, disciple of the living Christ; of Bishop, an angel in disguise; alleged equal of all the men who shake your hand and pride themselves on being styled your friends! *You*, who presume to extend the hand of succor to men in want, quoting the words of Jesus Christ as authority for your acts, and then deny His being in your heart!" He walked to the window, and stood, staring into the night. Then he stepped backward and dropped into his chair. "Anholt—Van"—the words were low, softly uttered—"You've emptied life's cup of bitterness to the dregs. You can't forget the taste, boy, if you keep the glass before you. There are richer, sweeter, purer drafts, my lad—drafts fragrant with the bouquet of happy memories, of kindly acts performed at needed times, of whole-souled confidence in fellowmen, of firm adherence to the ways of Christ, of love, of honor, of well earned and deserved peace. Keep that glass before you. Drink it often—drink it deep. It's the only tonic in all the world that makes life worth living to the end."

CHAPTER XII.

The Rev. Melville Storey gazed with inquiring eyes at the hesitating, quietly gowned woman seated on the opposite side of the gold embellished table—a table, which as an exquisite example of the cabinet maker's art possessed a corroborated history antedating the French Revolution. The white glare of the noonday sun, in its passage through the art glass window panes, became transformed into a subdued and mellow light, which left the features of both man and woman quite distinct, but—in the absence of shadows and sharp outlines born of rays more luminous—deprived each of opportunity to analyze the other's thoughts as recorded in the more subtle changes of the countenance. In the quiet atmosphere; in the calm and reassuring manner of the man, and in the knowledge of his supreme indifference to whatever strictures sycophantic adherents to convention's narrow code might make, the woman felt inspired to renewed confidence in the outcome of her call. With her gloved and shapely arms extended on the table's top, with fingers lightly clasped, and with eyes in which entreaty and earnestness were suggestive of the thoughts that lay behind, she addressed the minister in a voice so low, so pathetically sweet, as to make it seem an integral part of the scheme of harmony dominating the room by its gentle, peace compelling spell.

"I don't know what you think of me," she began with lowered eyes, "or if my coming to you here might compromise you in the eyes of friends, but when I've told you all, I hope—I know you'll believe I did it for the best."

"Pardon me, Miss Von Bonhorst, but I think I've guessed your mission now." The deep full tones appeared to fill the room with one vibrating sweep of sound. "Our friend's abhorrence of the confessional necessitates the rehearsal of his sins by proxy. Even proxies though, if I am not incorrect, must submit unquestionable authority for their acts."

"Please don't hurt me with such words as those. I'm here on his account—unknown to him, 'tis true, but I came that you might know the

trials he's subject to—in order that with such knowledge you can better help and guide him on his way."

"My dear friend—I call you that in deference to the part you try to play in Anholt's life; the last thing I should want to hear or pass opinion on would be the faults or weakness of a friend, unless he came to me direct, as man to man, and made disclosure of his soul's great need. I've long disclaimed intention of working along the lines of canonical obedience, but, as with the church I served, I hold the confessionary exists alone upon the throne of God and nowhere on this earth."

"Mr. Storey"—the face now wore a firm determined look; "you are bound to cut me off, but you *must* hear what I have come to say. As for my relating Mr. Anholt's sins, I don't believe he ever did a willful wrong in all his life. He's made mistakes, and because of them he's kicked back everytime he has a chance to rise. If another man can make a dollar he's credited with being an able business man. If Mr. Anholt tries to do the same, they call his act sharp practice. Last week I overheard Mr. Dixon express the hope that Mr. Anholt might in time become a member of the firm, and now today, because he made a little profit on a piece of land, Mr. Carter says they must drop all further idea of it."

"I think," said Storey, "I understand the transaction you make reference to. I must say that I feel our friend was wrong. I am quite confident he feels that way himself."

"He did what any other good business man would have done," she retorted, warmly. "More than that, Mr. Carter had the property offered him before and wouldn't even listen to the man when he came this time to see him. Oh! I wish you could see just half of what he is called upon to stand. Young fellows with hang-dog faces come in, and stop him on the street, and every time his hand goes in his pocket, until I wonder he has a penny left. And half of them are thieves who ought to be in prison, but he thinks he's got to give them something to prevent them publishing his shame. And anonymous notes and threats, and all because he's trying to do right and struggles to make a success instead of a failure of his life. I wonder that he don't break down or turn to crime and deserve the trouble he's got to shoulder anyhow. Instead of that he grits his teeth

and tries to smile, and makes a brave endeavor to keep the fight he's making day by day from being known to others."

Storey raised his hand. "In you," he said, "our friend has found a loyal, able, and I may safely add, a most observing champion. But Anholt needs no pleader here. It's because I understand him more than you can ever guess; because I know his weakness and his strength; because I've followed with painstaking care his heroic and self-sacrificing course; because I've seen, time and again, his time and energy and means, with neither thought of recognition nor reward, lift up and save some poor, deserving devil from eternal ruin—because these things have come to me I need no eulogy of our friend; because of them he stands to me as one of the bravest characters I've ever met. I love him more than I ever could a brother of the blood. I regard him with a deeper feeling of respect than I ever dreamed of showing mortal man. Even more, I expect to see the day when I shall follow him like student to the sage, into the way that leads to man's clearer understanding and closer relationship to his fellow man. I am fully conscious of the cause that brings you here today with anxious heart and mien. Our friend fights not alone against his past with all of its memories and resultant woes. He's entered into contest with himself. He wages combat with ambitions seeking vast results in time unreasonably and admittedly brief. He carries in his breast convictions strong and true, and yearns for the time when he shall give the world a great and universal truth. I sometimes think his character too complex for ordinary man to grasp, and yet, I know if he conquers his weaknesses in time, he will develop into one of the strongest characters of our age. But neither you nor I can plan with intelligence and skill the route that he must travel now. Somehow I seem to feel a vague assurance that he will work his own salvation out. Let us help him where we can. Let us trust him, nothwithstanding the evidence of his transgressions be as clear as day, and by such confidence prove clear title to our claims to be his friends."

When Storey paused, the woman's eyes were moist. For full five minutes she sat without a word, alternately biting her lips and pulling at the loosened fingers of her gloves. At last she raised her head and

gazed at the minister as if she would search the innermost recesses of his mind. Then she spoke:

"Mr. Storey, I too, in turn, will call you friend because of your relations to the man who has done so much for me. But just because I owe him what I do, I feel I *must* dispute the wisdom of what you say. You, and Mr. Hope and all the rest seem to think that all he needs is financial help, or companionship and sugar coated words. You claim to be his friends, and yet, at the time he totters on the line dividing safety from irreparable ruin, you calmly shut your eyes and confide him to his luck. Oh! that I were a man with chance and right to speak. What he needs is one good, loyal and restraining hand, and yet you all sit back and think your confidence in him will save the day. You're all afraid of hurting his feelings by advice, and just because of that, he's got to grope along his way in darkness and alone. I tell you it's wrong. If I were you I'd rather drive him by physical force along the proper course, if moral suasion wouldn't do, than chance the danger of his going wrong."

"And yet," remarked Storey, in a lower voice than he had used before, "I recall your disavowing a belief that such a contingency could ever come to pass."

"It isn't that," she replied. "Oh! why will you persist in misunderstanding what I say? He wouldn't knowingly do a wrongful act, but just as in this fertilizer deal he's going into now, he'll risk his last cent, and when his enthusiasm grows he'll ask one friend and then another to put money in the venture and imagine he's doing them all a favor. Then if something happens; if the ship they're sending out for samples don't return, or if the quality of the article don't do, they'll hold him responsible, and when they've raked up the mistakes he did make, and all that have been charged against him that he never knew a thing about, he'll be set down as a rogue and be worse off than he was before. I don't say the transaction isn't honest, for it is, and any other man could take it up and if it failed nothing would be said. But because it's Mr. Anholt, and because they like to kick the under dog, the whole thing will be called a swindle, notwithstanding he'll be the only one beggared by the loss. Oh! Mr. Storey, for his sake—for the sake of that dear wife of his who is to join him now

so soon, won't you try to hold him back? He's getting along so well in many ways despite all he's got to stand. Can't you keep him in this course until he gets real solid on his feet? Ask him, won't you, to go slow?"

The dark, penetrating eyes fastened with imploring look on the big man's face, stirred him with a feeling not akin to anything experienced in his life before. For the first time in his career, so far as recollection went, the words and presence of a woman made him both uncomfortable and alert.

"Miss Von Bonhorst," he replied slowly, "If woman's native tendency to disregard consistency is occasionally manifest in your words, there is yet so much apparent truth in all that you have said that I hesitate to comment or give answer to it now. But you're such a splendid pleader," he added, "why not become a party to this rescue work yourself?"

The mounting of rich color to her cheeks was visible to the man, even in the chastened light that filled the room. She arose and for a moment stood with eyes downcast. Then, lifting and directing them straight at him she answered in a steady voice:

"I cannot;" adding as she walked towards the hall, "but—will you?"

With his reply he knew the interview would end. The courtly grace that distinguished his movements—tall and heavy as he was—was observable now, as he bowed her to the door. In a voice entirely different from any she had ever heard him use before, he said simply:

"I'll try. I'll do the best I can."

CHAPTER XIII.

Having returned the folio to its place among the miscellaneous collection of songs and instrumental selections carefully arranged in a cabinet of Vernis Martin finish, Anholt leaned over and kissed the full, white forehead of the upturned face before him—kissed it with a touch warm and gentle; like unto some caressing zephyr born of man's first meeting with the God of Love, and doomed to linger only while the springtime of his passion reigns.

"Ah! dearest"—his fingers were smoothing back the mass of dark brown hair—"that voice—that song—those minor chords, reminding one of days in Wales. What memories they recall of Welsh melody and life; of Tintern Abbey with its dark hued rooks and silver moonbeams playing through the vines; of Monmouth, and of nature's frowning parapets along the valley of the Wye. How often in the weary, silent, dragging hours, their memory appeared to penetrate the gloom like some bright ray of sunshine from above. And now I have you, love, again. Inspiration grows and peace regains its throne; and recollections fadeth in the light of present happiness. "I wonder now," he continued, seating himself beside her on the piano stool—"I wonder if, way down within your heart of hearts, the germ of your old love for me survives—if by my life's devotion, dear, it can be nourished into being and made to bloom again; or if"—his arms encircled her and drew her to his breast—"in that divine forgiveness enabling you to overlook my sins, you have tendered me all that I can ever hope to get."

Her head was raised—a love light shining in her eyes—a light that only Anholt, blinded by exaggerated visions of his folly, ever would have misconstrued.

"Dearest Van," she said; "of forgiveness on my part there is no need, for if you sinned it was because of your affection felt for me; and that, dear, is the one great thing that means the binding in the coils of love, the woman to the man. You might have found—you could have found," she added thoughtfully, "a better way out of the trouble we were in,

and saved yourself much suffering and pain. But there now, dear"—patting him lightly on the shoulder—"I mustn't talk like that. We're going to forget it now and do no wrong again; and—as the story books would say, 'be happy ever after,' aren't we, dear?" She placed her arms about his neck, murmuring, "Kiss me, dearest—won't you, please?" Through the agency of love—dominant factor in the universal scheme—Anholt had come into his own.

Once, when discussing the question of woman's rights with some fellow members of the League, he had expressed an inclination to believe that Providence, when Eve was punished for her sin, had made a mental reservation to someday present a perfect woman to the world. "Eliminating, for obvious reasons," he had said, "mention of her who gave birth to our Christ, I half believe that when the time marking the redemption of this promise neared, a determination came to emphasize Divinity's recognition of the feminine virtues by creating three pure women instead of one, to exemplify the perfect type. Why the great distinction was conferred on me, of being given, by near relationship, the privilege to protect all three, I cannot tell; but if you who scoff at women, and as an object lesson hold an apple to my eyes, will take it on yourselves to sometime visit me at home, I'll introduce you to the three—my wife, my mother, and my sister, boys. God grant that I may live to praise them all for many years to come!"

And now one of the three was in his arms. Releasing his hold, he stood up, offered her his hand, and led her to a seat more comfortable across the room. They were in their home—not large, nor yet so costly as the man himself had wished—but still their own, in which to live along the lines that duty or their inclinations chanced to run. And this dear little woman, whose stature stood in strange contrast against that of the husband by her side, was mistress of it all. This high browed, sweet-faced girl, with dark and luminous eyes—honest mirrors of her pure, unsullied soul, now reigned a queen, e'en though possessed of but one subject to command. This wife, with courage proved through trials such as start strong men astray, was now to offer in her love, the one resistless weapon bound in time to help her husband to his goal.

Above the sofa an etching hung—presented Anholt by an artist member of the League. About to comment on an incident that first inspired the work, his words were interrupted by a violent ringing of the corridor bell—the familiar, annoying sound, inseparable from apartment life. With a bound he started for the door.

"Storey, for a dollar!" he cried. "Or Bishop, or maybe Bob—he's coming up. You'll like him, too." By this time he had turned into the hall. Dorothy heard him throw the latch; then give a sharp exclamation of surprise, followed by angry expostulation. She detected—she thought—the sound of a coarse, gruff voice, rising at times above her husband's words; then, something—was it a scuffle?—and Anholt backed into the room followed by two men—men whom the reader, had he been there, would at once have recognized as Essingham, of the police department, and Mr. Samuel Withers, of the League. Before opening was given either one of them to speak, the husband turned to Dorothy, who stood with pale face and questioning eyes, clutching at the sofa's back.

"Dorothy, dear," he said, "would you leave me with these—gentlemen, for just a little while?—a little business matter, you know—is all."

She glanced from his face to them, then back again. Walking to his side she made reply:

"I think, Van, I'd better stay. I don't believe with your experience with that man"—pointing at the officer—"you have anything to face but trouble, now."

"You're dead right there, little girlie," broke in Essingham, who stood near the door as if to prevent the husband's egress. "This guy of yours has been huntin' his now long enough. It's up state for him now, good and plenty."

Dorothy, stunned by the words, and despite her brave assurance of a moment since, staggered as if about to fall. Recovering, she clasped her hands and gazed imploringly in Anholt's eyes.

"Oh! Van—dear—not again!" she cried, in a sob-checked, hesitating voice. "Tell me—look at me, dearie—you wouldn't—you haven't done anything that's wrong again. Tell me 'no,' Van, when I've just come back to you." Shuddering and without waiting for reply she threw herself on

her husband's breast. Erect as a statue; with one hand resting on her head, and trembling in effort to maintain his self-control he made no attempt to answer. Instead, he looked inquiringly at the older man, who—hat and cane in hand—was standing backed against the wall, apparently in anything but easy frame of mind.

"Well, Withers—what is it?" The old man bristled up with rage. He had heard that sharp incisive voice before, and never with aught but angry thoughts. "You're the leader here, I know right well—talk out!"

Essingham, who rebelled whenever slighted or ignored, answered in the other's stead, at the same time tapping significantly a pocket in his coat, from which the jingling sound of some hard, metallic thing now came.

"Lay down there, will you, till this gent has had his say! If he'd hand it to you right, I'd slip the irons on, damned quick—take that from me."

Anholt, conscious of the tremor passing over the delicate figure held closely in his arms, started with a half suppressed cry of rage to spring across the space intervening between the officer and himself. Impeded by the woman's clinging body, he stopped, lowered his head, and uttered a few short, quick words audible to her alone. The hand of Essingham, moving toward his pistol pocket, was stayed by the warning voice of Withers, whose position was becoming more intolerable as the seconds passed. The detective's eyes, turned for an instant questioningly on his companion's face, missed the whispered words of Anholt to his wife. When his attention was again directed toward them, the only observable change was in the calmer demeanor of the man. He might, perhaps, also have noticed the woman stepping slowly backward, until, eventually, she seemed to find support in leaning on the *secrétaire* in the furthest corner of the room.

"I don't, sir"—Withers was saying to the sear-eyed fellow at his right—"like to hear such language, especially, I may add, sir, where ladies are around; and I assume, sir, regardless of this knave whose company she keeps, we're in the presence of a lady now. Remember, sir," he added, shaking his cane as if to lend emphasis to his remarks; "my duty as a Christian man, compels my offering this rogue a chance. He don't deserve

it though—no, sir"—turning and addressing Anholt—"you don't deserve it—not a bit."

The latter, who had regained a mastery over his emotion—for the time at least—looked unflinchingly at the aged one. "Your words are quite distinct," he said, "although a trifle loud. And now, as friends will soon be due, permit me to request once more, an explanation of your call."

Withers, desirous of bringing to a speedy close an interview that promised to bear so heavily on his nerves, and anxious lest the coming of the young man's friends involve him in a situation more compromising than he liked, raised his finger again in warning to the officer whose tendency to talk was still quite manifest, and stepping forward from the wall, replied:

"I should think, sir, this lady being here with you would have enough to bear, without insisting on being a party to this unpleasant scene."

"The lady will remain," said Anholt, calmly. "Besides," he added, "it's a long talk that has no joke, and you'll find she's abundantly able to discern the point."

"What, sir, would you insinuate? Don't think I'm here to play the fool! I asked you once, sir, to keep your dirty presence from our League and not corrupt our members with your touch; and you, sir—man without principle that you are—answer me like an impertinent young whelp. Old man that I am, you dare insult me, sir—aye, you ridicule me before the faces of my friends. I told you, sir, I knew the kind of dog you were, and now you crown your acts of infamy by carrying on swindling operations—to think of it, sir—under our very noses in the League! To think that I should see the day, sir, when our young men would become parties to such schemes as yours! I——."

"You refer," interrupted Anholt, with interrogatory look, "to the investment by two friends of mine in certain guano rights?"

"I refer, sir, to the chimerical industry that's meant to fill your pockets at other men's expense. I'm surprised, sir, that you don't lay claim to gold mines in the moon."

"I hadn't thought of that," commented the other, dryly.

"Now, sir," and the drug manufacturer, having placed his Fedora on the floor, brought his cane down in the palm of his left hand with a resounding whack: "You're either going to promise me now, in writing, to keep away from our building, and what's more, sir, from associating with our men, or I—I'll——."

"Well?" queried the young man, "you'll what?"

"I'll send you back, sir, where you belong; away from honest men who stand in danger of contamination by mixing with such hypocrites as you. Why, sir," he continued, shaking the cane in Anholt's face, "you belong, sir, to the devil's own. What infernal power you use to gain our members' confidence, I can't, sir, understand; but don't think, sir, you can wind me around your finger, or humbug me with honeyed words."

"Your talk," retorted the subject of this verbal attack, "is still considerably obscure." His eyes were flashing now, in anticipation of a crisis yet to come. "I judge, though, from the knowledge I possess of your co-operation with this fellow here"—the nod with which he designated the officer, signified both defiance and contempt—"and from the unreasonable, bitter way in which you've treated me, you mean that either here and now I must promise to sever my friendships—even my acquaintanceship—with League members, or you'll—you—" he hesitated, thinking of the little woman nearing him again.

"You'll go with me, my laddie buck, if that's what stickin' in your crop," broke in Essingham, who had begun to view with suspicion the movements of the woman, who had moved again to her husband's side.

"And on what charge?" asked Anholt.

"Charge, hell!" As the merciless, unfeeling words rang out, the husband's arm for the second time encircled Dorothy's waist. "I've got you pat. You ain't got no discharge from your parole, have you? And you've bucked the tiger for the last three months at Bishop's, ain't you. A wise guy like you, maybe can put the two together—see?"

Anholt, in spite of his endeavor to preserve a calm, unruffled mien, started as the full peril of his position was disclosed in the detective's coarse, expressive words. For the first time, he realized the technical mistake he made in frequenting his friend's resort, and the complications

possible through a misconstruction of the cause that took him there. The parole laws applying to the reformatories of the Empire State, have need of much amendment, as indeed they have of a more intelligent enforcement as they stand. A parole—as the law now is—becomes an absolute release in from six to eight months' time at the option of the parole board—an option too indiscriminately exercised when the prisoner has been at liberty that long. The state's ward, during this probationary period, reports in person every thirty days at the local office of the Prison Association, submitting a statement covering his earnings, his expenses, and the employment of his time. These reports, seldom verified, are forwarded to the reformatory clerk; the sixth one, usually accompanied by an official endorsement by the Prison Association recommending the man's release—a communication frequently based on anything but the proved merits of the case, but insuring freedom from further responsibility on the prison agent's part. With equal candor let it be explained, a slight infraction of the moral code is sufficient grounds for termination of the parole and reincarceration of the man—a result more often brought about through complaints made by persons desiring his rearrest than in consequence of any pronounced activity on the Prison Association's part. In truth, it may be said, that a mere report of moral remissness, if filed through any source of good repute, suffices for the revocation of whatever claims to liberty the accused one may have. No formal process of the law; no consideration by impartial courts of evidence adduced; no right or privilege of appeal—the dictum of the law is clear. The paroled man is just as much a prisoner as if confined behind the walls. If he is granted the right to move about outside it is for the purpose of enabling him the better to demonstrate his eligibility for unqualified release. Until that happy hour arrives he remains within the jurisdiction of the reformatory authorities. They can do with him as they will, and the prison agent—the Prison Association in other words—acting with their approval remains largely—one might say almost fully—independent of the courts.

Anholt, alive to the signification of a threat involving the jeopardizing of his liberty, ambitions and interests, awaited for a time, some confirmatory word or gesture from the older man. The latter, notwithstand-

ing his active and vehement enmity, as disclosed at each encounter with this paroled man, was still possessed of gentlemanly attributes, and, if a firm determination to force Anholt at any hazard from the field was evidenced by his acts, a strong disinclination to pursue the subject further in the woman's presence, made him hesitate to speak. Nor was his feeling of embarrassment assuaged by the realization that by his coming here in the company of Essingham he apparently condoned and lent encouragement to the oaths and rough, insulting language of that officer. As to the epithets he himself had used, they were descriptive, merely, and then besides, he held them justified. About to insist again, on Mrs. Anholt's retirement from the room, his intention was frustrated by her husband, who watching him intently, said:

"Am I to understand that you, professedly a Christian man, come to my home on this, the night that God has sanctified by returning me my wife, and here, before her, offer me the choice of rank disloyalty or jail? That you, cloaked in the mantle of your self-sufficiency—unforgiving, uncharitable and unjust, presume to act as judge of what I do, and then associate yourself with things like *that* to insure a prompt enforcement of the penalty?"

Essingham, with Anholt's finger pointed straight at him, would, but for the meaning look of Withers, have made short ending of the scene.

"I do not understand," the impassioned voice went on, "what act of mine provoked High Providence to draft me as a martyr to your malignant whim, and what is more, I've long since ceased to care a rap. I *do* know that behind the paid protection of your pliant tools you've shown yourself a blackguard, sneak, and as I told you once before, a noisy, silly ass. And when your senile mind reverts to that, please to recall as well, that to your menaces I gave reply in words I thought you'd understand. That same reply, old man, I give you now; and let me tell you that I mean it—mean it, do you hear—regardless of your wealth and pull. Withers, I say damn you—damn you, do you understand—and every threat you ever made or want to make. I'll block your efforts, every time you undertake transforming them to deeds."

Dorothy, fearful that her husband's words would irritate both men to a point of action fatal to the plan she knew he had in mind, had tried to interrupt and stop him in his speech. Withers, the convulsive twitching of whose facial muscles, revealed the agitation of his mind, started forward, with cane upraised as if to mete out vengeance on the speaking man; while Essingham, satisfied now that his time for action had arrived, caught his excited principal with outstretched arm and pushing him backward, forced him in a chair.

"I told you how 'twould be. Watch me—he'll sing a different—— Hell! what——."

In turning, he had caught—reflected in the tall and gilt framed mirror—a sight that left him for the moment, devoid of power to act or speak. A delicate, white hand, drawn from the depths of a woman's skirt, brought forth a shining, deadly thing. As quick as lightening in the sky, another, stronger hand had seized it—a hand whose owner, whirling like a flash, now levelled the weapon with unerring, steady aim, upon the still half bent figure of the officer of the law. The latter, although inured to danger in its many forms, was by no means a fool, nor was he, with death standing in his path, inclined to run against it when the way around was clear.

"Up—quick—your hands!" Before the command had been fully uttered two pairs of hands, instead of one were moving in the air. "Not you Withers—sit down—I'll show consideration for your age. *You,* Essingham"—to the detective, watching for opening to pull his gun—"keep 'em up! You—By God, I've got you where I want you now! Up—up! damn you, with your hands. You know me—you move and I'll drive your carcass full of holes. Dorothy, dear"—his eyes, like balls of fire, never left the officer's face—"his revolver is in the outside pocket of his coat. Please get it, and when you do, just lift the coat a little and make sure another isn't in reserve. Don't fear—I'm longing for excuse to drive a bullet home. Ah! thanks. Now, gentlemen—your attention. You, Mr. Withers, will retain your seat. You, Essingham, stand still—now, so—face about—towards the wall—hurry up—shut up, you—not a word! Now, Dorothy"—the ringing, vibrant voice, portentious of some

tragic deed, had again dropped to notes of solicitude and love—"the telephone, there, just behind the door—will you get it please, and hand it out to me?—that's it—good—thanks."

A small stand, with onyx top, was used by Anholt as a rest for the 'phone attachment. With a quick movement of the foot he drew a chair alongside, seated himself with left hand holding the receiver to his ear while with the right he maintained his control over the instrument of death, pointed unwaveringly at Essingham. Then he gave his call and waited. The connection was quickly made. "Hello! I say, is this Parker? Yes? Is Mr. Storey there? I——hold on a minute." Placing his hand over the transmitter he started from his seat. "That'll do you"—addressing the officer. "Turn around and keep that trap of yours closed tight—and you"—turning to the nervous Withers—"will take your instructions from me alone; remember that!" Now he removed his hand from the telephone attachment. "All right, Parker, go ahead! How's that? Oh! all right—thanks. Mr. Anholt—yes—good night." Coincident with the snap signalizing the return of the receiver to its hook, the sharp, nerve-exciting ringing of the hall bell put a stop to the protest which Withers started to make against what he designated "a heinous and criminal outrage." Anholt requested Dorothy to answer the bell, adding:

"Bring them right along. This picture is too good for any of my friends to miss."

A moment later and the imperturbable, immaculately dressed Bishop, instinctively deferring to the woman's evident antipathy to pleasant repartee, and by his courtesy and tact transforming her embarrassment into a spontaneous feeling of security and faith, stepped into the room. Anholt, familiar as he was with the idiosyncrasies of his friend, could not refrain from admiring the marvelous self-control exhibited by the latter as his eyes encountered the surprising tableau. To all appearances he noticed nothing unusual or extraordinary. The whole thing might, indeed, have been a mere hallucination running riot in Anholt's excited brain; a suspicion strengthened by the actions of Bishop, who, with a courtier's grace bowed his hostess to a seat, nodded unconcernedly to his friend, and then, his eye having been attracted by the etching referred to a short

time since, commented tersely on the incident Anholt had undertaken to explain when the first interruption came. Following this, he seated himself with easy gesture in a chair adjoining Dorothy, who, had she not become, through hearsay, to some extent conversant with his ways, would undoubtedly have been quite frantic by this time.

"Now there is Anholt," he remarked, apropos of nothing. "A man who leans to target practice in a flat deserves the curb of a rigid marital discipline. Poor judgment, his, in choice of targets anyhow. Now, if he hits the bull's eye, nothing's lost. If he doesn't, though, he's got a damaged wall to—I beg your pardon, brother." He had stopped suddenly and eyed his friend interrogatively.

"I started to say," returned the other, "that if you'll satisfy Mrs. Anholt you can act as well as talk I'll be very much obliged. It was to give you a chance to prove your Mephistophelian talents, as it were, that I've been waving this infernal gun around until my arm is sore. The point is this, Bishop. These gentlemen insisted on my company. You can well guess why and where. It was a case of go or keep them here until one or the other of my all powerful friends arrived. I concluded to adopt the latter alternative and keep them. The one, you know. The other, I have told you of. He is a gentleman by heredity, association and repute. He is a man who stoops to the publication of anonymous personals in order to ruin men he doesn't like. He is a remorseless enemy of mine because of some distorted function of his brain. Now that you've arrived I'm prepared to let him go."

Withers, who time and again had started to rise, only to be checked by Anholt's word or gesture, now struggled to his feet, prepared to take advantage of his enemy's expressed willingness to see him depart, and yet doubtful whether he should attempt it without a direct notice sanctioning the act. Essingham, leaning first on one foot and then on the other, had, since Bishop's arrival, been as docile as a child, presenting by his demeanor a vivid contrast to his former blustering mood. Dorothy, who throughout an ordeal bound to work injury to her delicate nervous organism, had rendered such efficient service to the man she loved, turned

to Bishop with an air of confidence so apparent as to cause him—as he afterward observed—to feel the spirit of omnipotence in his veins.

"Just to think," she said, turning her trustful eyes on his; "this is my home-coming. I don't know what it means," she continued, "but I know Van isn't to blame. Won't you please help him, Mr. Bishop, and save him from these awful people? You're *so* powerful." The request and smile were irresistible. "You see," she persisted; "that's why he took the risk of making them stay. He knew when you came you would protect him." With the last words, she placed a soft, imploring hand upon his own. Anholt, standing near with lowered arms, glanced down. He saw, and heard, and smiled.

"Dear girl," he thought, "you're saving him from a graver peril than I ever ran tonight."

Bishop's eyes had flashed back a reassuring look to her's. "Nothing easier," he said. "Your desperado husband had figured out a merry time —of a different sort—tonight, but the tragic muse must have mixed her dates. Anholt"—turning and looking up at his friend—"that artillery, please—both of them." No change of posture, other than extended arm, signified a feeling of concern. Taking the proffered weapons he extracted the cartridges from the one belonging to the officer, with a knowing hand. Then, opening Anholt's, he glanced up with an inquiring smile. The pistol was empty.

"Yes, he knew," volunteered Dorothy, reading his thought. "Otherwise I wouldn't have—Oh! Van, I didn't mean to tell. Truly, I didn't." Both men smiled. Before either could reply, Withers approached the group and exclaimed:

"I insist, sir, that you let me leave this accursed hole. I'll show you sir. I'll have the satisfaction of the law. Why, sir, you're a murderer at heart. You're——."

Anholt interrupted him. "I notice," he observed, "these revolvers both are empty now. Commendable discretion, yours. You are free to go whenever this gentleman"—indicating Bishop—"consents."

The one referred to raised his hand. "About that law you're dying to invoke," he said. "Wait—you need an object lesson. *ESSINGHAM,*

come here!" Bishop now was on his feet. At the sharp tone of command, Withers fell back as if in fear. The officer, who had determined to try and bluff the situation out, whirled around with a startled, guilty air.

"Now what is't to you?" he began. "What in——."

"COME HERE!" This repetition of the order effectually prevented the completion of the detective's question. He hesitated, looked first at Withers, then at Bishop, and—obeyed.

"Essingham, you're a thief—admit it!"

The one accused, stared in surprise and shrugged his shoulder. "Admit nit. Gimme the gun and I'll git out o' here, but I ain't fallin' for no confession game."

"It's better than opening up about Polly Henderson. You're falling easy, man."

At the enigmatical words, the fellow started back and threw up his hands as if to ward off an attack. The ruddy tint in his face was succeeded by a pallor eloquent of fearful thoughts.

"Great God!" he cried. "You're not after me for that?"

"That's up to you. I want that answer. Come on!"

The officer, with head lowered, and eyes roving here and there about the room as if in search for opening to escape; opened his lips; closed them again; fumbled with his watch chain; shot a curious, fleeting glance at Bishop, and then—mumbled in words almost inarticulate: "I guess you're right at that."

"And you'll leave Mr. Anholt alone after this?"

"I'm done, what with this and them personals what you got me to lose thirty days pay for, I've had enough," and he moved toward the door as if he deemed the inquisition over.

"Here, Essingham, we'll end this séance right. Down on your knees and make apology to Mr. Anholt."

"Oh, here, Bishop!" interposed the latter. "Let him go! He's been humiliated enough."

Ignoring his friend's intervention in the detective's behalf, Bishop kept his eyes riveted on the quailing figure before him.

"You're slow! I don't propose to give this order twice."

What thoughts were flashing through the mind of Essingham; what curses remained unspoken on his lips; what sense of degradation dragged upon his heart, Bishop neither knew nor cared. Martinet at all times where the question of obedience arose and master of the situation here, he would be satisfied with nothing short of prompt and unqualified submission to his will.

An awkward movement; a bended knee; a blur of unintelligible words, and the law's minion had abased himself beyond retrieve. His bloodshot, puffy eyes now turned to the merciless being—the one whom in a physical encounter he could have crushed as he would a fragile shell—in a mute appeal for liberation from the scene. Once again the remorseless voice rang out:

"This gun I'll keep. Your shield goes on the desk tomorrow—for good—you understand? It's that or the truth about Polly, man." Then, turning to Anholt as Essingham, accompanied by Withers, started for the door, he queried: "Any remarks, before the session ends?"

"I think," came the response, "with reputation assassins we've had words enough for one night. If this," he commented a minute later, after having shown the two men the door, "had been a scene at People's I'd have called it melodrama run stark mad."

"It seems to be," said Dorothy, who had been standing by the window, "that scenes—live scenes, I mean, must be constructed around the emotions and their strength cannot exceed the degree of passions which they depict. What imagination is so versatile or strong as to conjure up for our approval displays of feeling intense enough to produce crises more tragic than those seen in our everyday life. Do you know"—glancing at her husband and moving to a seat—"I shudder every time I think of getting you that pistol. Suppose you hadn't fooled the man——."

"My main concern, dear," replied Anholt, "was lest our neighbors take up arms. It's lucky there's no building across the way. I wonder now," he continued, "where Bob and Storey have wandered to."

"The first," said Bishop, long since having returned to his normal, languid mood; "is probably rehearsing Gayboy's Parlor Etiquette. The

latter—may kind heaven save!" If the invocation was unsatisfactory and vague, it received its justification in Storey's solicitous attention to Miss Von Bonhorst, who, accompanying him, arrived five minutes later.

"Don't mention it," offered Anholt in response to Storey's rather detailed explanation of their late arrival. "We've been dallying here with the theory of mind controlling matter."

"With what result?" asked the minister.

"Acceptance of its truth—providing," the host supplemented, "the supply of subterfuge is adequate for the test."

CHAPTER XIV.

NEW YORK, September 27th, 1900.

WALTER E. POWERS, ESQ.,
Corporation Counsel's Office, City.

My dear Mr. Powers—

I have your favor of yesterday, inviting me to address your class in Political Economy on what you term my "original theory of government." At the present time I believe it would be unwise for me to make any public expression of my views on this subject, and I must therefore, much as I regret the necessity, decline to avail myself of your courteous invitation.

This "theory" is as yet a mere jumble of crude ideas, as evidence of which I enclose herewith copies of a series of pamphlets on the subject, which were published some years ago by a society of which I was a member. I, of course, admit the authorship. Although my experience since that time has tended to confirm me in the beliefs I then expressed, I have been unable, owing to circumstances, to fill in the gaps or round off the jagged edges of the argument. I am extremely averse, because of that fact, to proclaiming myself or being heralded as the originator of some new doctrine, which by reason of its imperfections and incompleteness, would simply result in my being termed another crank with Utopian proclivities. I have no objection to, nor have I the right to oppose, a discussion by your class of the pros and cons of the ideas I have expressed, and for that reason and lest you find it difficult to select from the mass of matter contained in these pamphlets, the really salient features, I submit the following brief synopsis (if I may call it such), which may be of service.

I hold castes or classes (using the words in precisely the same sense) to be ineradicable so long as the mental powers and endowments of mankind vary as they do today. The true measure of man is not to be found in his wealth, or profession, or method of earning a livelihood, any more than it is to be found in his color, race, location on the map, or physical attributes. The test lies in the brain—the link between the animal and the divine; the organ which by usage and in time, bears evidence of our mental, moral and spiritual progress. Our ambitions, purposes, likes and dislikes, knowledge of this thing and that; our sufferings, rejoicings, experience and hopes,

react inevitably on it and leave their imprint there, making for our characters, our weaknesses or strength. It is the glass through which we see our fellowmen, and so determine their relative position to ourselves, according to our capacity for fairness and for perfect understanding. This being true, I hold it reasonable to assume that the more men differ in intelligence, with a consequent inability to see things from the same standpoint of view, the wider the divergence of opinion as to the position one man holds as compared with that of some one else. For instance, we see mere wealth viewed in two far different ways. To the ignorant it is the great desideratum, the sole objective point, in reaching which, one becomes possessed of all else needful to bring happiness to life. They believe this in their heart of hearts, despite their loud mouthed vomitings against the rich. In proof of which, I challenge you to point a single instance out, where some poor man, having by chance been showered with sudden wealth, has not ceased his rabid vaporings on pocketing his gold. Compare this with the attitude assumed by men of culture and pronounced intelligence. Observe the downward glance with which they look on fortune in its material sense. If, in their relations to other men they think of it at all, it is only as an incidental thing, influencing their attitude no more than would your friend's possession of a new born babe affect the feeling which you have hitherto held for him. We see, therefore, that with the higher development of the brain, the conditions that make most surely for dissatisfaction with our sphere in life (thereby tending to produce the class distinctions we decry), gradually disappear. In other words, humanity's hope for extrication from caste bondage lies not in pulling our superiors down, but in working up to them along intelligent and consistent lines; through a more intense devotion to our moral and our mental selves, and less to the material side of life. This end will not be accomplished today, nor yet tomorrow; nor will all the tracts, and literature, and lectures in the world, in themselves bring about the desired result. We must proceed along new and unique lines—lines totally different from any yet laid down. In demolishing the present social structure with its false distinctions as to class, we've got to set another up with the grades or differences clearly outlined and described. We must admit that classes of necessity exist, and with such admission furnish a practicable plan whereby each individual of good health and normal mind, regardless of his or her means or previous sphere in life, can, with reason, hope to reach the highest state. In the disease itself, we must find the antitoxin bringing ultimate relief.

In a frank acknowledgment of its existence our sole hope for its eventual extinction lies. The first essential must be, to show that wealth, as such, plays not the slightest part in advancing one under the scheme which I propose. We must frame a code of laws making the quality and extent of one's intelligence the determining factor in placing him where he properly belongs. To make (if you insist on calling it such), the world a giant school, with you, and I, and all the rest striving for the grade above. As each man nears the top the catholicity of tastes and interests will become more manifest, just as today, in hundreds of colleges throughout our land, the trend is toward more democratic ways, and the making of real worth the sole criterion of each student's social rank. Nor does a proposition of this kind involve such complications as might, at first seem obvious. The standards by which the mental attainments of each man or woman would be gauged, need not be cumbersome or vague. Each person's progress would be along the lines his or her inclinations turned, but it would be always onward, upward, to that point where every branch of specialization would become merged into one radiant constellation, with a brilliancy illuminating all the world. All of this, of course, implies man's being honest with himself and candidly confessing the existence of truths too long obscured by prejudice and sentimental waves. The rank illusion of man's equality to man, is already disappearing like the mist before the sunshine of live thought. Heredity, environment, mental or physical disease, wealth or poverty, influence, genius, ability, due regard for the rights of other men, or lack of such regard, and above all, education or its want—these are a few of the conditions that have assisted in making a mockery of our boasted equal rights. It is a truth that finds corroboration in the social unrest of today. Why not be honest? Why not admit the theory is wrong, all things conditioned as they are? Then, when this is done, let us get to work and rectify our error, even if we must, perforce, destroy the system now built up. True, it would disrupt the present social cliques; it might affect your neighbor's standing as regards yourself; it undoubtedly would reverse positions here and there, and force wealth down to make room for honesty and brains; but, in doing all of this the real end sought will be attained. Each man is placed where he belongs. He may qualify or not, as he prefers, for the rights and privileges of a higher sphere. If he does, it will be because pure merit and nothing else, has paved his way.

You will argue that the quality of men's minds varies, and consequently their ability to assimilate knowledge must ever remain anything but the same; that, as a result, under my "theory" the distinction between classes must remain as great, if not greater than they are today. Admitting this would be the case at first, and without commenting on the fact that at least the distinctions would be honest ones, my contention is, that with the passing of years and generations; with decades—perhaps centuries, of striving for the prize; compelled in a way to work toward the higher planes, this inequality must in the very nature of things, gradually diminish and finally disappear.

You will tell me that as men climb the intellectual ladder, so will the ladder itself increase in height, and the distance to the top remain unconquerable. I cannot believe it. Acknowledging the race will never cease to progress in learning and achievement, I still assert the rate of advancement would be small as compared with the speed one could reasonably expect humanity to attain in harvesting to the full the present and prospective crops of demonstrated truths. Strength comes through exercise, and practice increases with surprising strides the retentiveness of the mind. Forced to study, the child will learn its lessons in a night. Left undisturbed at play and the summer passes without the opening of a book. We are all children. You must either force us or make it worth our while to use our brains beyond the mere necessities of the hour.

You will object that as a solution of the social problem it would require too long a time. Well, the disease is a chronic one and originally took root when the second man outran the first. What remedy is powerful enough to destroy the germs in a single day? What makeshift will permanently ease the pain? The question is—are we—all of us, living only for today; or what brave percentage does exist, willing on behalf of the greater race to come, to sink corrosive selfishness and mistaken, hurtful pride, in furtherance of this greatest cause of all? How many, honestly admitting this to be a country of unequal rights; of class distinctions based on purely material and dishonest grounds, will help to reconstruct the social structure, with castes provided for along consistent, well defined, and equitable, (you will smile at the word), lines; paving the way for their ultimate extinction in the provisions made, enabling all to reach the topmost rung regardless of material assets—assets which, as things remain today, would, if lost, carry with them to the bottom, social prestige, influence, a badly dismantled pride and all? But the assets I suggest as essen-

tial to one's social ascendancy can neither be lost nor taken by any other man, whether by hook, or crook, or might.

You will say, this policy would destroy domestic harmony; disrupt families, and array their various members one against the other; a contingency provided for, (in so far as I believe it best), in the proposed regulations covering the contraction of marital obligations, and in the provision giving children their parents' rank until maturity is reached, at which time they are transferred to the grade to which they rightfully belong. On this point, I long debated whether it might not be wisest to have all children under age exempted altogether from class law—that is, to have them all move as equals in a neutral zone. I concluded, however, that such a plan would prove unfeasible, if not indeed threatening to the accomplishment of the end in view.

You will contend that no young person on emerging from the teens, could hope to retain their standing in their parents' class, if that be near the top. No more do young men now, by right of their intrinsic worth, exert real influence or retain their prestige in the social world. It is a matter solely of reflected light; a position as dangerous as it is undeserved; an evil too frequently robbing some worthy senior of well earned preference in order to favor a bumptious and unregenerate youth. This will probably suggest to you the objection that even under my plan, wealth retains its advantage here, inasmuch as the rich man's son, released from the necessity of earning his livelihood, could devote himself more fully to the cultivation of his mind. In reply to this, I call your attention to the suggested legislation making it compulsory for every man to show an actual, a proved, and a continuous earning power before he can secure admittance to the grade above. Dependence on bequests, gifts, money in hand, or on the old folks for support, to any extent whatsoever, operates against him when the subject of his promotion is under official consideration.

You will note the law-making powers increase as the highest class is reached, until the supreme authority—the last word in the executive, legislative and judicial branches is vested in the citizens of that grade. And here you have your guarantee of a government conducted along the highest intellectual, ethical and nonpartisan lines it's possible to conceive.

There is nothing particularly new in the method of taxation which I advocate. It is merely a matter of proportioning the rate to the exact property holdings of each individual, whether the property be

personal or real. This man, rich, must pay such percentage on his wealth, as will exempt, or nearly so, the poor man owning only house and home, from being taxed at all. Verified accounts of each person's holdings, at the time of his or her decease, are made and filed by the State's accountants, among the public records, where they are available for inspection by all who care to see. Any portion of the estate, not included in the last tax return made prior to the owner's death, and proved to have been in his or her possession at the time of making the report, would be immediately confiscated for the benefit of the community at large.

I think you will find that ample provision has been made, discouraging to moral lapses, and for the preventing of questionable characters from holding either office or authority,—a most important item when man's jurisdiction over man is the issue most at stake.

You will notice the rule of caste does not apply, either to the mentally infirm, or to persons undergoing punishment for crime. In reference to the latter class, you will observe that sentences are to be imposed according to no set or arbitrary rule. No consideration is to be given to legal restrictions similar to the one which, in some states makes the stealing of $34.99 a misdemeanor only, regardless of the conditions under which the theft is perpetrated; while, if one cent more is taken, under circumstances comparatively excusable, the act becomes a felony and is punishable as such. Under such laws as I suggest, a crime remains a crime, but its degree and the penalty to be exacted are to be determined only after the prisoner's history, motives and the conditions surrounding the commission of the offense are thoroughly considered by the sentencing court—a court bound by no law saying this shall be the minimum, and that the maximum punishment to be inflicted for any one especial kind of crime. And here it may be pertinent to call your attention to what I have designated the Bureau of Motives. When General Booth first broached his plan for counteracting what was termed the "suicidal craze", the thought occurred to me that by elaborating on his idea, a department might be organized under state control, tending largely to reduce the commission of many forms of crimes. Such a department or bureau, with extended powers, would work in conjunction with the criminal courts. With impartial and unbiased mind it would search not alone into the wrongdoer's past, but would strive to ascertain what course of reasoning turned him from the honest path. It would seek the motive, holding it of greater moment than the act. It would occupy a field like unto nothing we've had before. Unmoved either by the prosecutor's charge or by defendant's plea, its verdict,

when announced would be second only in importance to that of the jury called upon to determine the prisoner's innocence or guilt. This Bureau would be vested with the power of granting conditional immunity from prosecution to the first offender, who, still undetected, makes a full and voluntary confession of his guilt. There are hundreds of young men today, employed in various capacities throughout this city's length and breadth, who are shaking with the dread of some small peculation being brought to light—conscience stricken, and strongly tempted, but for the possibility of arrest, to confess their transgression to the men they robbed. But, as things now are, such men are likely to commit a second crime in order to prevent discovery of the first. From that time onward, their downward progress is inevitable and fast. But here you have a Bureau, (call it a confessional if you will), to which the man, assured of silence and protection goes. He explains his motive—the circumstances leading to the deed. He is looked up; his reputation to this time is found to be untarnished; his record, (so far as the evidence shows), is clear. Legal minds, if necessary, are brought in play; some means devised whereby the money is returned—if need be by a loan—a loan that under conditions such as these is well secured. And so this man, saved from exposure, retaining his position—in many instances at least, and with reputation clear, profits by the lesson and keeps in honest ways. If he errs a second time and his error comes to light, his former lapse is published to the world and punishment is meted out sufficient to fit the requirements of the case.

But enough of this. In what I've said, you will find enough material for an interesting argument. The details given in the pamphlets I enclose, will doubtless help along.

You understand, of course, that I hope some day to try my ideas out—in a small and humble way it's true. I am not so foolish as to look for their adoption by the world through any other course. To gather around myself a small community in sympathy with this plan; to take my position in whatever social grade I rightfully belong; to test the "theory" out—changing, enlarging, modifying here and there as experience directs; then, if real merit seems to show, to gradually enlarge the field of effort until the right is earned to urge consideration of its principles by the world at large—that represents the furthest I can ever hope to go.

Sincerely yours,

ANSON VAN ANHOLT.

Five enclosures.

A MAN WITHOUT PRINCIPLE?

NEW YORK, September 27th, 1900.

THE REV. MELVILLE STOREY,

2—— *West 57th Street, City.*

Dear Storey—

After mature consideration of your counsel and argument of Sunday last, I am unable to find any valid reason justifying my withdrawal from the office of vice-president of the International Guano and Fertilizer Company, much less from any participation whatsoever in its affairs. It would mean disloyalty to the friends who have invested their funds on the sole understanding that I would be actively identified with it. It would mean a censurable indifference to my own best interests at a time when probable success seems near, and I must admit, at a time when my own obligations have become most pressing. Frankly, dear Storey, your appeal lacked the logic and convincing earnestness inseparable from a plea made with the sincerity of one's convictions. I am constrained to believe therefore, that it was inspired—by whom I shall not undertake to guess. But in that belief I find it easier to reply, and especially so, because it was by reason of my opposition that neither you nor Bishop became financially interested in the venture.

Prof. Rosseau, the well known mining engineer, has accepted the presidency, succeeding the temporary president, Leonard, who resigned. The professor, like myself, is very hopeful of success. Our sample cargo should reach Mobile and be ready for analysis by the middle of November. If the quality runs eight, six, or even four per cent of nitrogen, with a proportionate amount of phosphoric acid and potash, my hopes will meet with realization. You understand, we would receive on the basis of $2.80 per unit of nitrogen, for the stuff—say $16.80 per ton of 6 per cent quality. The entire cost of digging, shipping, and marketing is a little less than $5.00 for each 2000 pounds, in cargoes of 500 tons and over from the Atlantic islands. The cost from the Pacific would be about $3.00 more. To this we must add the royalty payable to the owners of the grants, in lieu of our purchasing them outright. On six per cent guano this will amount to something like $2.00 per ton.

A failure to show a satisfactory percentage of nitrogen will mean, of course, that we lose the capital invested—a contingency not impossible in the promotion of any new and untried enterprise. I am unable to conceive, however, that such an unfortunate ending to our plans would be prolific of the disastrous results to myself that you have taken pains to intimate. If it should be shown that you, after all, are correct, then all

I can say is,—God help me in anything I ever try! Sink or swim though, I propose standing by the ship until the end. So, dear Storey, for the present let it go at that.

In line with your suggestion I have written Powers, enclosing the pamphlets, and explaining that at this time I prefer not entering into any public discussion of our plans.

Mattison, Steck, and Miss Howlison are now at work. Steck's wife though, is pretty low and I think we had better prop them up a little longer. Am going down with Mrs. Anholt tonight, to try and cheer them up a bit. Will see you Sunday.

Yours,

ANHOLT.

CHAPTER XV

"Surely a man couldn't be so cruel as that, and—mightn't you have been mistaken?" While she spoke Dorothy's compassionate eyes were directed on Marie Von Bonhorst's tear stained face. Her hands, previously busy with the intricate details of some embroidery work, lay folded in her lap. Her entire attitude signified a feeling of intense sympathy not unmixed with interest in the narration of her companion's wrongs.

"No, dear; New Zealand is too small for men like him to remain unknown." Her abstracted air, with gaze wandering through the window, on out beyond the sky line of the city's housetops until at last it rested on the Jersey hills, betokened memories belonging to some distant place and time. "And then," she continued, still monotoning her recital, "following the information of his cruel desertion of a wife and child in Auckland, a letter came from Madrid telling me of mama's death. She was Spanish, you know, and was just ready to come back to me after a long, long visit home. Oh, Dot! to think"—the chanting voice now was stirred to emphasis—"that it should make me glad to learn that her dear, good soul had gone. She was the last friend I possessed in the whole wide world. All I had from that time onward was my shame."

For a time both remained silent. Dorothy, impelled by her condolatory nature, leaned forward and gently caressed the other's hand. "Never mind," she said in a low and soothing voice, "it's over now; try to forget it, dear. I oughtn't," she added, in a tone of self reproach, "to have asked you anything."

Marie glanced at her with a faint, wan smile. "You didn't ask me, Dot. I simply felt I must confide in you. Both you and Mr. Anholt have been so kind I thought you ought to know—just everything." Stifling the tears that threatened now to start afresh and with voice again devoid of cadence or inflection, she resumed the telling of her darker past.

"I wanted to get away from everything and everybody I ever knew, before they guessed the truth. He had taken nearly everything

I had of value, but with what mama left I raised altogether nearly eighty pounds. First, I thought I'd go back to England, near the place where I was born. But people said the prospects here were better, and —you know I had to think of another now, and so I came. It was so long before I could get anything to do, and then, just as work was offered me, there came the hospital—and all. Oh! dear Dot!" she exclaimed with a look like unto nothing Dorothy had ever seen there before, shining in her eyes—the tender, wonderful, proud look bearing the tale of motherhood. "When you see how healthy, and sweet and fat she is, and how she rolls her little eyes around and laughs and coos when I come near—and her cute chubby hands and feet—why, she's just so strong, she can almost sit up by herself." For a moment sorrow had fallen before the onslaught of a mother's love; and then—"I wouldn't let them tear her altogether from my arms, and the little money I had left went to find the tiny dear a home until I could find a place to work. Oh! it was so hard, Dot. Winter came and things went on from bad to worse. Once I had a situation as cashier in a candy store, and because I wouldn't stand the insults of a lot of boys they let me go. Then I worked as a waitress down at Child's, and when I stayed away one morning to answer an advertisement they put another in my place. And all the time I heard my baby calling; I saw her little outstretched arms and heard her gleeful cry until my heart grew sick and courage seemed to melt away. Then, dear, when everything was gone and all my clothes were pawned, I fell down sick. I had no food, nor light, nor fire, and not a single friend. The woman who kept my baby, insisted on more pay, and at last she wrote me, saying if she didn't get it the following day she would put my darling in a public place. The note came at night when I was lying in the dark, cold, and sick, and hungry. I struck a match and read it by that light; and then, forgetting I was ill, feeling nothing but an intense craving for my child, and driven by the passion of my motherhood, I dressed and staggered down the steps and out into the street. I was so weak I fell there—unconscious. That's where Mr. Anholt found me, dear, and—you know all the rest."

The woman, having ceased to speak, bent forward, resting cheeks and chin between her hands. Gradually the look of mingled affection and sorrow receded before the darkening cloud of bitter thoughts taking possession of her mind. The eyes, first shining with maternal love, then dull and gloomy with despair, now flashed the signal of some vengeful passion holding her in its control. Suddenly she sat erect; her eyes were hard and cold as steel; her hands were clenched, her arms half extended in the air.

"Oh! Just and merciful God," she cried. "I pray the day may come when I shall meet that monster face to face. I ask for nothing else in life. Grant me, Oh Father! but that one great boon. Or Satan—if it be within thy power, wilt thou bring this thing to pass? I'll follow thee with loyalty and joy then, until the end of time."

She sat for a minute longer, rigid as a statue—until the pent up tears burst forth once more. A wail, significant of her tortured soul, rang out, and the trembling, quivering form sank backward in the chair. She felt her fevered brow first kissed, then stroked by calming, velvet hands. She heard the cheering, encouraging and sympathetic words. In the presence of this pure-souled, noble woman at her side, she breathed the soothing, softening atmosphere of a renewed and blessed hope. Her arms went up; she drew the other down—kissed her, wildly, passionately, and hugged her—fearful lest she move away —closely to her breast.

Anholt, entering quietly and expecting to surprise his wife alone, paused wondering, at the entrance to the room. Stepping cautiously backward, he reached the corridor door, opened it stealthily and descended to the street below.

"Today," he commented later to Dorothy, as they discussed the evening meal, "confessions have apparently been the rage. I explained my troubles to Professor Rosseau; Storey hints at his predilection for Marie, and insists on being told the why and wherefore of——."

"And Bob," interrupted his wife, "told her yesterday that she's 'the whole big cake,' and a lot of more good things. And do you

know," she added, "he's going regularly to night school and Marie insists he talks something like a gentleman."

"Bob *is* a gentleman," came the response, "regardless of what he says or wears. Now dearest, about Professor Rosseau. I told him everything. He took it philosophically enough, and while evidently inclined to censure me for withholding the facts from him so long, he disclaims any belief that my association with the company will compromise either himself or it. That's how he feels today He's so erratic, though, one can't vouch for what he'll think next week."

"I wish," said Dorothy, "he hadn't given up his business when he went in this thing. They say he's such a splendid mining engineer and earned a handsome income. Aren't you afraid, dear, if this doesn't come out just as you expect, he might try to cause trouble for you?"

"There, now, sweetheart! let's not anticipate. 'Sufficient unto the day,' et cetera, you know."

"I know, dearest, but I sometimes think our trouble is often to be found in our not anticipating and so providing against the ugly things to come. And I know you're worried awfully, even if you do pretend not to be. Don't you think, dear, it would be better to let the business go as Mr. Storey advises, and pay your present debts off as best you can, instead of holding on and so making more? You've got a good position and we could take a cheaper flat and be so happy."

"Little one," he replied, "you don't understand. What could I accomplish on a salary small as mine? We would exist and that would be about all. As to liquidating the obligations I've contracted now, a hundred years would scarce suffice. I've had to borrow, you see dear, to hold my end up in the deal, and I simply must pay Mr. Hope back soon. He's advanced me money until I'm actually ashamed to meet him at the League. You see how essential it is therefore, that I hold on until our ship comes in."

"Van, dear"—her voice was earnest and her eyes eloquent of love—"I do appreciate how much it means to you and what an awful disappointment it will be if anything goes wrong. You've made so

many plans and want to do so much; and you know, dearest, don't you, that I'm not thinking of myself? I can live anywhere with you, and I could sew, or work, or help along some way if the worst should come. But it's you, dearie; you've suffered so much already, and your big heart gets you all tangled up—promising and trying to bring about so much——."

"Sweetheart mine," said the man, pushing back his chair; "I don't believe that Providence instills high aspirations in a man without providing means entirely adequate for their achievement. Somewhere there lies the key to my success. I propose to dig, and hunt, and fight until it's found, regardless of torn clothing or of scars."

"You know though, Van," the gentle voice replied; "sometimes our gaze is turned so high we miss the good things lying at our feet. The days and months pass by in figuring on happiness to come. Why not permit a little sunshine to enter our lives today? If we fail to practice being happy now, how can we expect to enjoy it in a larger measure later on?"

Anholt, walking around the table, encircled Dorothy with his arms and pressed his lips against her cheek. "Happiness, they say, is the synonym for song. Our practice shall begin right here, my love, tonight."

CHAPTER XVI.

On November the nineteenth, the rapid succession of ominous events, disastrous both to Anholt's peace of mind and to his hopes and prospects for eventual relief, culminated in the return to Mobile harbor of the Schooner *Kent*, after days of buffeting against the gales. It is questionable whether during the preceding week the man had experienced an hour of uninterrupted sleep or rest. Stockman, the broker, first engaged to prepare the company's application for a corporation charter, and subsequently designated as its fiscal agent in anticipation of a stock flotation if the quality of the guano justified, had, *sub rosa*, given Anholt an inkling of surreptitious actions on Professor Rosseau's part. This information, when considered with advices the young man already possessed pertaining to recent journeyings of the mining engineer to Washington, appeared portentious of a "double cross," to use Anholt's own words. On hearing it he had hastened to Jersey City and boarded the first south bound train. Six hours later he sat in a recess of a room in the State Department, studying the mass of documents bearing on the subject which for the moment was lying nearest to his heart. Few who have occasion to consult these files, but are astonished at the jumbled state in which the records invariably are found, or at the inexplicable unconcern and negligence with which the employee left in charge dumps them on the first convenient table for any inquiring visitor to read. To withdraw, amend or insert a document at will, is a privilege one might believe conceded to every one, judging by the clerk's indifferent air. To what extent, if any, such action has occurred, obviously remains unknown; but true it is, that with the passing of administrations and of years the more involved the records seem, and the more conflicting grows the evidence of ownerships and rights.

Among these papers, Anholt found an instrument that, causing him to start at first, had later on perusal, been provocative of a curious smile. It was a contract, filed the day before, and made between the

present owners of the guano grants and Professor Jean Rosseau, in which the stipulation ran, that should Anson Van Anholt default for any reason whatsoever in the payment of the additional option money nearly due, his option thus abrogated, should for a consideration specified, be conveyed to Rosseau or such parties as he might designate.

Two days later the filing of another contract enriched still further the voluminous assortment of red ribboned sheets, apropos of which new document Anholt had muttered to himself; "I think that'll hold him for awhile."

Suffering under a poignant mental tension he had listened with a critical ear to each word uttered by his friends, fearful lest such words might bear a double interpretation, unflattering or inimical to himself. Thus, frequently, expressions made with the best intent, were, by his sensitive mind construed into phrases meaning the exact reverse. Not but what hints were being bandied well about incapable of construction in other than a derogatory light; and these, quick to reach the ears of creditors, helped to leaven the feeling of distrust until the least of them—butcher, baker and their kind—transformed his home from a haven of content into a fort besieged by emissaries of the men he owed. Once, tantalized beyond endurance by the more aggressive of the lot, and confident of his ability to anticipate their presentation by a substantial deposit in his bank, he undertook to pay the debts by checks; a proceeding that by reason of his inability to raise the funds to meet them resulted in a bigger tempest than before. Disclaiming any feeling of annoyance or alarm to Storey, Hope and Bishop, and resolutely frowning down their repeated tenders of assistance, he struggled valiantly to retard the inevitable end. Dorothy, now the crucial time had come, forgot his blind and heedless disregard of her advice—advice, which had it been adopted, might have made their burden less, and ignoring her own convictions encouraged him to hope. With loyal and courageous heart she prayed the granting of the one thing that apparently could save them now from ruin—the early and successful termination of the expedition sent to southern seas. In accentuation of his cumulative troubles, Anholt learned that

Samuel Withers now held through purchase a solitary share of the guano company's stock; a holding, small as it was, doubtless sufficient for the end he had in view. This knowledge effectually counterbalanced the worried man's feeling of relief at Essingham's resignation from the Police Department. If, to presage his complete and final Waterloo additional complications were required, they were provided in the apprehension on a burglary charge, of an East Side lad—a protegé of his, who luxuriated in the cognomen of Happy-go-lucky Joe, a title prefixed on the records of the Department by the baptismal name of Joel Makepeace Higgins. Anholt, in a rather inglorious attempt to sidetrack him into the narrow groove, had requested him through the mail to call and talk it over—a communication which, when discovered on the boy, insured some pointed if misleading comments by the press—a gratuitous exposure which Mr. Carter held, despite the warm protests of Dixon, necessitated Anholt's withdrawal from all connection with their firm.

All of this will indicate the position of the man and the unenviable light in which his acts were being viewed. It likewise illustrates how easily good intentions run to waste; how surely desolation follows in the wake of rash, impulsive acts; and further, how the most unselfish man, unless he places strong restraint upon himself, will find his generous nature a stepping stone to deepest trouble, if not indeed, to sin. The way of Stanley Hope, when all is said and done, remains the sole highway to earthly peace, to Christ's dominions, and to a sure fulfillment of our hopes. To temporize with wrong, even in an infinitesimal degree is to eliminate all prospects of either happiness or rest. This was the truth that now stood out pre-eminent in Anholt's sick and tortured mind.

The ship at last was in; analysis had been made, and the cargo proved no more valuable than pure dirt. Professor Rosseau, acting promptly on the first telegraphic word had hastened to Mobile. His report confirmed the worst fears entertained. The vessel's log; the expert's detailed record of his work; the full cargo of worthless stuff, all bore witness to a duty faithfully performed. Of marketable guano there was none. The evidence was conclusive, apparently unimpeach-

able and clear. Anholt, who had received the information over the telephone, threatened for an instant to collapse. Dorothy, standing by him, and startled by the tense expression and ghastly pallor of his face, endeavored in her own brave way to cheer him into speech. In impassioned outcry she knew that he was safe. Only in a silent mood like this did she feel his danger lay.

"Please go out, dear, and shut the door. I want to think." The hollow voice seemed borne from far beyond the room. No accent; none of the rise and fall in tone that ordinarily helped to give his spoken words their charm; these were merely articulated, nothing more. For just a fraction of time the woman's eyes were turned longingly, anxiously on his. Bending over, she kissed the fevered brow; moved to the door, and after a final glance at the discouraged man closed it and sought refuge in her room. More lonely than Anholt himself, her tears were shed not because of her own suffering, but because of his.

Left alone, he staggered on rising, like a man in drink. He was mentally and physically unwell. The darkened room seemed tenanted with the spectres of his buried aspirations. The last illusion faded from his brain; hope was a memory; ambition for the moment seemed suppressed. Nothing but the blank walls of despair; the gibes and threats of fellow men; the certainty of absolute, heart-rending ruin, was manifest for the moment to his mind. Nothing? Note the faint, though radiant smile that finally creeps across his face, breathing its story of ineffable tenderness and love. Note the stiffening muscles, the upright posture of the head as the thought of his possession springs momentarily back to life. Oh! love—divine, unconquerable, unreasonable, at times apparently unjust! Preserver of ambition, body guard to hope, savior of man's noblest attributes, clarifier of his faults—what man in thy possession can with permanence despond? How manifestly bright the augury of happy issue and success, when plus the ownership of this prize, loyal and proved friendships gleam from out the firmament of the past and beckon one like evening stars, to repose, to solitude and peace!

Two days later a party of stockholders encircled the massive oaken table in the room reserved by Broker Stockman for just such purposes as it served today. Anholt, Rosseau, Withers, Cunningham, Patterson, Stockman, and a dozen others, called together by hastily written notes comprised the group. Rosseau, the president of the recently incorporated company, after calling the meeting to order, waited patiently until the minutes of the preceding Stockholders' and Directors' meetings had been read, and until after Stockman, as Treasurer, had submitted his report of the company's finances—a report chiefly noticeable for its brevity, and for the absence of assets, either cash or otherwise, promising partial reimbursement to the men whose money had been lost. Then, Rosseau, who had prepared an exhaustive report covering the company's history, the experimental voyage and its results, read it carefully, slowly, and with dispassionate, even voice. At no place in it did he offer criticism or comment. The facts were stated—that was all. When finished, his black eyes moved with a mathematical precision characteristic of the man, from face to face around the table. Not one was spared and each felt that to some extent he had betrayed the substance of his thoughts. When he resumed his seat, all turned as if by prearrangement and directed their gaze upon the man because of whose captivating word-pictures they had suffered loss. As Vice-President of the corporation his position opposite Rosseau enabled him to note with practically a single sweep of the eyes the battery of expressive glances focused on his face. In response to the mute request for an explanation he arose and stood facing them for a moment without a word. There was as little of bravado or assurance depicted in his countenance as there was of cringing fear or shame. Extremely pale, with tell tale eyes messaging their story of his sleepless nights, he appeared less the culprit than the bearer of some sorrow entirely disassociated from the issue now at hand. When he spoke, the expressionless, measured monotony of his words, like the chant of some remembered verse, fell upon his listeners' ears with effect far deeper than had he voiced his attitude in some passionate appeal. Prepared for the latter by reason of their knowledge of the man, his manner by the very nature of the contrast, impressed them with a fuller sense of the suffering he endured.

"Gentlemen," he began. "You have heard our President's report of our disastrous venture. Comments from me would be superfluous—I assume uncared for. Until recently, with one or two exceptions, you were all my friends. Because of that each one of you must bear some portion of the loss. I argued—you listened. I believed my statements—so did you. Official records, analytical reports, published history, all helped to stamp my words as true. If I was wrong they are wrong. If these islands offer only such cargoes as we secured, every leading government has been humbugged for years. It's our experiment against the world's. I still believe the world is right. I'm going some day to find out. Now, I'm bankrupt, ruined, and in debt. Professor Rosseau hopes by reason of this fact to secure possession of these grants. You can place your own construction on his desire. He's filed a contract looking to that end. The contract, he imagines valid in case I default in making the payments specified in the option I proposed transferring to you. Don't interrupt me, please!" as Rosseau started to explain. "I'll soon be done. His contract, I have claimed is void. I hold another option—a new one, duly filed—on these same rights and islands, and covering a period of two years more if my contention is upheld. The guano laws guarantee protection only to citizens of our land. Contracts made with aliens are to all intents and purposes null and void when dealing with these rights. The law has been sustained. Professor Rosseau is an alien. When a boy he ran away from home. He came here and prospered, but still remains unnaturalized—a citizen of France. I propose to hold this option in trust for all of you. I propose to ascertain for myself, the truth about these properties. Not soon—I've got to earn the money first—but someday. My accounting will be fair to all. Gentlemen, in sacred confidence I bared my soul to one of you. He betrayed me. Another here has helped to drive me to the wall. His name is Withers. I'm down—I'm out. To neither in this hour of trial do I bear malice. I am not blameless and I'll pay the bill. If bitter comments are ready on the lips of any here I ask for but a moment more. You can revel then to your hearts' desire in censure, threats and hate. But before you pass the sentence give thought to me, then look well and carefully on yourselves. What have I gained through loss of yours? You are disap-

pointed. I am suffering, ruined, helpless, sick. Compare conditions first—then talk. I don't want sympathy or help. I do want justice based on an unprejudiced consideration of my acts. Gentlemen, you hold my resignation. I'm going now. I bid you all good day."

Anholt stepped backward, lifted his hat from off the rack, and passed out into the hall. Half a minute later Cunningham and Patterson had grasped him by the hand. "Cheer up, old chap!" the former cried. "You want to keep that upper lip in line. I say though," he added as the lift descended into view; "I don't often swear, but of that bunch in there I must say, darn 'em, and darn 'em bad!"

CHAPTER XVII.

The day succeeding that of the company meeting was cheerless, gloomy, cold. The kaleidoscopic changes of the dark and lowering skies were accompanied by spasmodic showers—showers which ere they reached the ground were caught and eddied in chill, fitful gusts of wind, attacking man and beast alike with benumbing, penetrating force. Like unto the lapse of sunshine into night, so had the placid summer season retreated before the ruddy fall's advance. The latter, now in turn, because of warfare waged between the elements, seemed prematurely doomed.

Within one house at least, the dispiriting conditions were analogous to those without. Despondency had placed its chilling blight upon the heart. The war of passions took the place of that of wind and rain; depressed minds the place of clouds. Here too, pacific, tranquil summer had succumbed to a contentious winter's sway. Burlap protected furniture, curtainless windows, and empty, mocking walls, silently proclaimed the breaking of a home. With night's approach the devastation seemed complete. Anholt, gnawing viciously at the pipestem in his mouth, endeavored to ward of the breakdown he felt was imminent. Dorothy on her knees, packing the last few trinkets in her trunk, restrained the tears by mere exercise of will. Marie Von Bonhorst, who immediately her work was finished, had hurried up to them, sat by the window staring at the darkening sky. The man, who long since had exhausted his vocabulary in seeking phrases fitting and forcible enough to express his opinion of his self-termed asinary course dreaded the approach of night. Some of their furniture had been sold to provide a temporary living fund for Dorothy. The rest, to be stored against such happier time when they should again call it into use would be removed tomorrow, and tomorrow with Dorothy and her husband meant the parting of the ways. She, would remain for the present with Marie. He, with eyes and footsteps turned toward the west, would battle once more against his record and himself.

"There isn't a blessed thing, dearest," he had said to her, " on which to make the start except your love and confidence, and such little courage as I still have left. But pshaw! dear," patting her on the shoulder, "that's quite enough for any man, or ought to be at least."

"I just know Van, you'll succeed," she had replied; "especially since you've promised never, never to ask any man to put his money in a deal again. And I know you'll keep that promise dear, won't you?" His affirmatory nod had brought a light back to her eyes.

His own concern was less directed to his prospective struggle for rehabilitation than to the necessity for severing relations between himself and his staunchest friends, with his consequent inability to participate further in their work. He had looked upon the men he helped largely as children of his own, and had watched their progress with solicitude and care. In their success he gloried; in their failures smypathized. With true parental faith he had persisted in believing their ultimate regeneration would be wrought. Of all his sorrows the leaving of this task of love appeared the hardest he must bear. He had reasoned his success at this would furnish a stronger leverage in the prosecution of his greater work. He thought perhaps these very men might lend themselves to the experimentation of his, as yet, embryonic theory of the perfect human rule. And his theorization along this line contrasted brightly with his attitude on every other cherished aim, in that among them all it remained the only one whose consummation had not been irremediably prevented by his impulsive, devil-may-care and enthusiastic way of doing things. In this he apparently had felt that time, experience and the logic of events would prove the essential factors in accomplishing the desired result. And—singular that he conceded it at all—one all important need impressed itself ineradicably on his mind; namely, the proving by his record of a worthiness to stand as sponsor to the cause; an undertaking one might believe unsurmountable now considered in the light of recent sad events. Perhaps within the inscrutable mind that frames the law of life this need of Anholt's had been recognized. In the surging Maelstrom of his woes he found a life buoy in one solitary truth—a truth that offered him before had been neglected, or at best put to but occasional use. A truth whose full power now was evident and which he clutched and fastened onto

with a grasp promising to last through all the years. The one great truth that Stanley Hope had emphasized when first they met—honesty without qualification—the non-existence of any end so worthy as to justify questionable or dishonest means. Who can say that Anholt, convert at last to this fundamental, just decree, had not through his misfortune moved one step nearer to his goal?

The night before, his farewell visitation to the under world was made, Storey, Bishop and himself had made the rounds. No dependent had been missed. The care of each he charged upon his friends. Not one had guessed that the burden on his heart was heavier than their own. Then in the quiet atmosphere of Storey's home the three had talked and planned. It was a conference that lasting to the morning hours had sent Anholt forth encouraged to fight the battle of his life. Despite their protests he had maintained his one decision to the end. He would accept no aid. No man or friend henceforth should loan, advance or give him anything. This being settled other things had been discussed. Two unanswered problems weighed on Anholt's mind. In one he sought the motive directing the acts of Samuel Withers. The other appertained to Bishop and his partnership with sin. The first, none of the three could answer. The latter, neither man conversant with the facts would offer to explain. "Because," said Bishop, "the moment hasn't come." To which Anholt had replied, "I'll try to make my patience and my curious nature jibe. The first, dear Bishop, henceforth shall be, as the last already is, exhaustless as the sea." Of other things Storey summarized the impressions both he and Bishop shared in a few short and earnest words.

"Frankly, friend," he had vouchsafed; "we're both inclined to extend congratulations on your getting in this mess. We might have taken you to task at times, as you will recall I tried just once to do, and perhaps saved you this temporary pain. But it had to come sometime. It's over now and you'll find yourself morally stronger than you ever were before. Your skirts are a little frayed and spotted I must admit, but they bear no traces of intentional wrong. You were sorely tempted and your failure to adopt dishonorable tactics to save yourself, stamps you in our eyes as genuine and twenty-four carat gold. Wherever you decide to set your standard up, my friend, we know you'll keep it there unsullied until we

join you. Of the three I believe that now you're farthest from the danger line. We all can profit by the experience you have had. Let us avoid the pitfalls of an impulsive generosity as religiously as we try by common sense philanthropy to do our Master's will. In our small sphere as men, entangling alliances are as fruitful in suspicions and heavy penalties as in international affairs. Let us hew close to the line, satisfied to use as tools the talents given us. That is all our Father asks. Anholt—friend—Bishop's prayers and mine follow you in your fight. That's the most—restrained by your decision, apparently we can do. We pride ourselves on claiming you as our friend. We owe you thanks, not alone for the broader field of action you've revealed to us, but because, buffeted about, knocked down and trampled over as you have been, you've come through cleaner than you were at first. Your material loss can't weigh to the slightest degree against your moral gain. In that, my friend, and in your consistently following the path you've now laid out, is to be found Bishop's hope and mine. The hope that you, and he and I will some day, some how, work out the problem in our hearts. My friends, will you, on this our parting night, join me for a time in kneeling at the Master's feet?"

PART TWO

CHAPTER I.

In but one solitary particular does Chicago, Empire City of the West, descend to the plane of a monotonous consistency. Her streets and boulevards, planned with geometrical precision, but defiant both to convenience and to art, stretch to the four points of the compass with a regularity tiresomely unvarying and pronounced. The negligible number of such thoroughfares as run diagonally across the map are, like exceptions, mere incidents that prove the rule. Conceive now an extensive area of land, devoid of gentle undulations, and level as the home of Neptune, lying contiguous to an inland sea. On this permit the tracing by imagination of a city outlined as above. Cover it in fancy with edifices built of wood and steel and stone, with the extreme east center—adjacent to the Lake—favored with the tallest and the best, and physical Chicago appears to mental view. Here, though, endeth sameness. In all other things the spirit of her social, mental, religious and commercial being runs rampant and wild. Her life by day and night, as if in retaliation for the circumstances rendering her physically infirm, inclines to the extreme. In wealth and poverty; in religions, races, politics and morals; in charities and in crimes; in commercial ethics and in professional progress; in education, literature and art; in aims, expectations and in hopes; in methods of municipal legislation and control; in all the diversified relations incident to man's transactions with his fellowman; in superlatives, both good and bad, Chicago, the extremists' Mecca, the fanatics' Rome, retains her pre-eminent, if in some respects unenviable repute. Whether her atmospheric vagaries are the reason for, or because of the varied and unsettled humors of her population, or whether by mere coincidence her weather seems as fickle as herself, is of small import. It may be that nature, in ordaining the rehearsal of her works upon this stage prior to starting them on tour, reasoned that an opportunity to study her climatic products

at first hand would be a gracious and deserved tribute to that city's whirlwind growth. Because of this, all kinds of weather—or if you prefer, no kind at all, can be considered typical of this Metropolis of the Lakes.

On the morning of which we write, the elements were in a sullen, angry mood. A persistent, drizzling rain had ushered in the first day of the year's last month. The heavy pall of soft coal smoke from the Illinois Central's engines on the Lake Front, swung gradually across Michigan avenue—on past Wabash, State and Dearborn, until it merged at last with similar obscuring cloud-like masses from the west and south. Notwithstanding it was nearly noon, the lights were burning undisturbed; their warm glow beckoning through the fog and mist in cordial invitation to the passers-by—that is, to those possessing wherewithal to purchase offered wares. In a narrow doorway on Van Buren street, near where it intersects the broad and busy Clark, a figure, minus overcoat and with hands sunk deep in trousers' pockets, stood gazing contemplatively at those who passed. His clothing, of quality undoubtedly good, was damp and in sad need of tailor's goose. His linen, such as was distinguishable behind the turned-up collar of his coat, was mussed and soiled. The face was dark with two days' growth of beard. The hair, though carefully brushed, was becoming inconveniently long. His entire appearance told of recent better days, but of a critical and most disheartening now.

"Well, your lordship;"—one near him might have heard him thus soliloquize—"erstwhile owner of rich guano rights and high mogul of the seven seas, suppose you plan your *coup d' etat* for rolls and coffee, quick! This," he continued, "is about what Bob would call 'certainly th' limit an' fer fair.' Nowhere to go; nothing to do; nothing to eat, and less to wear every time the sun goes down. Anyhow, that's ended!" glancing down at himself; "there isn't another blessed thing to soak. I would like to get in that hotel, though, long enough to get a decent shirt. Pretty tough, that, to find your room door locked and to be politely told to keep away until your bill is paid. And that employment secretary over on La Salle street—twenty-five cents before he'll book me and advises cleaner clothes when I return. A fine association of young men he leads, though, judging solely by the building! George Harry!"—as a gust of cold rain

struck him in the face—"this, next to that ten cent bed I tackled last night, is certainly the *ne plus ultra,* as Powers would remark, of personal inconvenience. 'Ergo,' quoting Bishop—confound it, I wish I could forget those fellows for a while!—I'll inventory." Methodically his hands went through his pockets. "Cash reserve, one cent. That means a postal to the little girl. Food reserve, none; in process of digestion, though, a half pint of guaranteed germ proof water. Clothing available for trading purposes, not a thing. Jewelry, nil. Prospects, one job addressing envelopes with a Dearborn street directory concern next week. Meantime, nothing. Questionable assets, nerve and a dead sure certainty of winning out. But," he added savagely after a pause, "the whole lot bunched together wouldn't buy a half way smell."

For a half hour longer he stood looking moodily at the passing cars and people. Once or twice he stepped aside to make room for some other unfortunate who after tarrying for a short time and eyeing him curiously, decamped to quarters experience had proved to be more comfortable as well as more likely to provide a drink.

"This experience," he observed to himself after a time, "may be essential as a training course and lesson, but it's deucedly hard to assimilate the last without a little substantial sustenance coming along at times. Great idea"—shrugging his shoulders—"to point the moral to a man and then to starve him in its learning! There's one thing sure, I've got to knuckle to that Salvation Army game until next week. It's tough enough, but honorable, and God knows I've done my share by them when I had the means!" With a clutch at his coat collar in an effort to secure more protection for his neck, he stepped out from the recess of the hall. Hesitating for an instant as a sudden shifting of the wind drove the chilly drizzle in his eyes, he seemed about to reconsider his decision. Then with the audible exclamation, "It's a long walk, but here goes!" his jaws closed with a snap and he turned down Van Buren, then north to Jackson Boulevard, west again across the bridge, south to Harrison and west once more toward the place he sought.

The Salvation Army as an efficient, successful and unique working organization, stands pre-eminent in its chosen field. Its results are beyond

the power of statisticians to compile. Courageous, yet modest; aggressive, without undue sensationalism; patient, consistent and tireless; caring neither for fulsome praise nor dismayed by critic's rant, it penetrates and pleads the cause of Christianity in every quarter of the Globe. Never pausing in self-congratulation at success; never sitting down to compute the number of souls already saved; never satisfied until it has accomplished a little more, it represents in a tangible, intelligent and convincing form the illimitable possibilities of a loyal adherence to the teachings of our Christ. Whether in Victoria, Fourteenth or State streets, its policy is the same. More than in any other association of human kind, with forces anything like so large, has it succeeded in subjugating the individual to the cause, thereby eliminating the dangerous factor of self-interest, while in practicing the precepts of its creed it has influenced to an almost miraculous extent the conversion of those who doubt. In its purely business management it offers instructive lessons to the most astute of financiers. We, however, are just now interested in but one phase of the business side, and that the manner of conducting the so-called Army Stores, toward one of which Anholt had turned his steps. These stores usually consist of a store room proper, in which goods are offered to the poor at prices ridiculously small; a receiving room or warehouse, in which they are mended, cleaned and stored until desired for sale; a dormitory building in which the men who do the work both eat and sleep, and a stable for the housing of horses, carts and harness. The Adjutant in charge is necessarily a member of the Army. The store clerk, the warehouse hands and the men who drive about the city soliciting contributions of papers, clothing, furniture and the like, are recruited largely from the great world of the unemployed—men devoid of means and often hopes, but who retain that one God-given grace—a self respect compelling them to earn such food and lodging as they get. Plus their living, these men receive a small cash sum, averaging perhaps a dollar each for one week's work. Nothing is required of them in the way of religious professions, statements of their record, promises, or expressions of regret for omissions or commissions of the past. Their presence there is ample evidence of need. In securing its relief on conditions of this kind they preserve one

trait of manhood, on which if they prefer, they may safely start to build again. In the conduct of the Army Stores there is no loss nor waste. Everything is turned to good account. The papers are gathered, sorted, baled and sold in full ton lots. Clothing, household utensils, books, medicines—all are made to serve some useful end. People whose poverty prevents their paying even the small price asked for the goods receive them free. Most, however, preserve their independence by paying—after much haggling, as a rule, 'tis true—for such things as they need.

Through personal contact and co-operation with Army workers and with the unfortunate class they aimed to serve, Anholt had familiarized himself with this phase of the organization's work. In this knowledge, derived under conditions so entirely dissimilar from those existing at the present time, he had discerned an avenue of honorable escape from his serious predicament. In the consciousness that he had liberally contributed both in time and money to its cause he derived no small sense of satisfaction now, encouraging him to believe himself well within his rights in taking advantage of this feature of the Army's policy. Possessing to an extraordinary degree the saving trait of adaptability, he felt no misgivings either as to the manner of his reception or as to his ability to adjust himself to surroundings radically different both in the personnel of his associates and in bodily comforts from those known heretofore. His temperament, in this regard was a happy one and characterized by his almost invariable success in winning the respect and confidence of men, who, prodded by misfortune, were accustomed to eye with suspicion any act or person promising them relief. In whatever circle of society he moved, men instinctively regarded him as a wearer of their brand and tendered him their confidence as readily as they hearkened to his suggestions or advice. In his prompt seizure of the task allotted him that day, and in the nonchalant air with which he tumbled into his half of the narrow bed at night, ample proof was given, both of this phase of his character, and of his irrevocable determination to adhere without deviation to the exalted moral standard he had set before him as necessary to his rehabilitation in the world.

CHAPTER II.

"Where's that new fellow—Holt or Bolt, or whatever his name is? Here, you!" as the object of his inquiry, leading an indifferent looking, dark bay horse, came into view; "git a hustle on with that nag. We got a fairy trip today and want to drag our load down early."

"Right you are!" was the cheery reply, as the recruit backed his equine companion into the shafts. His senior, who traveled under the pseudonym of Jerry, eyed him critically.

"Say, are you a Cockney—or maybe from the Provinces? No? Well that's cross pond lingo, anyhow," he added, as Anholt nodded his head.

"Just picked it up over there, I guess." The careless reply was lost on Jerry, who having satisfied himself as to the integrity of the harness, threw the lines over the dash board and jumped into the covered vehicle, motioning Anholt to follow. Later, to the latter's courteous declination of the proffered chew, Jerry, as the outfit turned from Harrison street toward the north, gave a significant shrug of his broad shoulders. Supplementing his generous "nibble," as he termed it, with a pipeful of the weed, carefully cut from the self-same plug, he puffed steadily and silently away. Anholt, despite his hungering for the companionship and solace of a smoke, preferred the solitude of his thoughts to the possibly unilluminating discussion bound to result from a request for tobacco made to his fellow unfortunate on his right. The weather lord, consistent in his contradictory moods, had impressed Old Sol into active service, and with a supreme disregard for dates or the harmony of things, had sandwiched an Indian summer day between his more appropriate displays of wintry goods. Stirred eventually to speech by the exhilarating air, Jerry removed the clay pipe from between his lips, squirted the accumulation of dark tobacco juice upon the asphalt street, shifted the tobacco itself to the other cheek, and turning to Anholt, said:

"We're goin' up to Buena Park, which is the cinchiest spot there is fer our graft. The Adjutant don't let nobody work it but me—leastwise not

now. Ever been up there? No? Well, it's high toned, all right, an' the liberalist bunch in Chi. Last trip I pulled down the load in less'n two hours. It were the swellest lot of stuff the Adjutant's got in yet, so he says to me when I hauls up in the yard. With me'n you humpin' ourselves we'll shake the place by noon." For a time Jerry continued chewing vigorously, ruminating the meanwhile whether he should favor the other with further speech or not. Deciding finally in the affirmative, he turned to his companion with the remark:

"Now, lookee here! I'm goin' to put you next. You see here 'tis. We haul up off Evanston avenue somewheres and work different sides o' the street. No front doors, mind you!—allus go round 'nd when they shows up give 'em a nice, polite bow so's they get wise 'tyour not a hobo, and spring your little song. There's nothin' more to 't. If there's anything comin', you'll git it—if there ain't, move on. Onct in a while they'll top you off with a coin or somethin' for yourself. But you've got to show the Adjutant it's straight, though. About eatin'? Sure, that's fixed 'nd I got the price. That's the only comeback to this here run — no decent grub. They renigged on the booze biz up there so's nothin's doin' with schooners or free layouts, 'nd you've got to stand for a regular eatin' joint. What d'you say," he added suddenly, as if fearful he might lose the idea before he gave it words, "to makin' a quick play up there so's to git a man's feed at Mulligan's or someplace else like't on the way back?" So enthused was he over his inspiration that he pulled old Dobbin up with a sudden jerk and gazed expectantly at Anholt's face.

"I'm not heavy on the schooner proposition," answered the latter; "you can drink them both, and welcome, but I'll certainly be with you on the eating end."

As Dobbin, startled from his reveries by Jerry's shout, moved patiently on again, the latter, beginning to refill his pipe, remarked: "When I was a young fellow 'nd had the chanct I couldn't think of nothin', 'nd now when it's no good I'm showin' the most surprisin' form." Then, unexpectedly, to Anholt, thereby calling him back to earth: "D'jer ever booze much?"

"Not yet!" came the unthinking reply.

"Not yet!" Jerry repeated, as he struck a match on the dash board. "Well, take it from me, bud, change your mind, 'nd don't!" an observation followed by a prolonged silence on the part of both.

Less than three hours later, the wagon laden to the limit of its capacity, was moving south. Jerry, with mind intent on his prospective feast, prodded the bay horse with a vigor giving rise to serious doubts in the latter's mind as to his driver's sanity. Anholt, mentally reviewing his first series of attempts to corner, in Charity's name, the available supply of cast offs, wondered no less at the consideration given him as an agent in the Salvation Army's cause, than at the interest the people evidenced in its welfare and endeavors. Jerry, for the first time in his experience second in results obtained in canvassing this particular territory with another, eyed his companion with increased curiosity and respect. Restrained by the inviolable unwritten law of his kind, discountenancing inquiry as to an associate's past, he could not disabuse his mind of the belief that Anholt was a specimen so radically different from any other he had heretofore encountered as to justify a little subterfuge in endeavoring to ascertain just who he was; the result being that the other's noncommittal answers had piqued his curiosity beyond its original somewhat excited state. "I ain't got gray matter enough; that's the trouble"—explaining his failure to himself. "I'm goin' to put Davey up aginst him tonight, that's what. Maybe he kin do it. Git ep there, Dobbin!" he shouted, suddenly noticing that the wise animal, profiting by his driver's cogitative mood had settled back into his normal gait.

Coincident with winter's approach, the drivers and helpers around the Army's dormitory building, had pre-empted its basement as a suitable place for assembling after the supper hour—a place where they could smoke, gossip, decide current political and sociological problems, and in general accomplish with tongues and imagination, deeds which, if undertaken in reality, would land them either in Washington or the mad house. This clearing house for ifs, buts, might-have-beens and didn'ts, was probably twenty-five feet square, low, smoke begrimed, and dark. Two sputtering lamps, seldom cleaned, emitted a dismal light, which, filtering through the haze of vile smelling tobacco smoke, left the room's occupants in prac-

tical obscurity—a situation not totally undesirable at times when rankling memories give signs of their existence in one's face. In the exact center of the basement set the furnace, whose spreading, covered pipes fastened to the cross beams overhead, rendered walking in an upright position a dangerous and difficult task. In one corner was the first installment of the winter's fuel supply; in another a pump and sink at which the men performed their ablutions. The third and fourth corners were the graves of miscellaneous assortments of odds and ends for which no earthly use had yet been found. A dozen or more boxes and a few infirm chairs placed around the inviting furnace and occupied by as many men of different ages, histories and abilities, and your mind's eye holds an authentic picture of the scene in which Anholt, on the evening following his first trip with Jerry, was playing a temporary and inconspicuous part. Religious topics were tacitly tabooed. In fact, as Anholt afterward remarked, the whole thing brought to mind Madam Tussaud's wax-work reproduction of Guy Fawkes and his gang figuring out the details of the great Gunpowder Plot. A half hour after the substantial supper of fried liver and potatoes had been washed down with a giant cup of really creditable coffee, the newest member of the group was appreciatively puffing away on a pipe which Jerry had managed to rake up for him. His thoughts, wandering far off toward the Atlantic shore, were interrupted by an observation made by an old, long whiskered fellow, who for some minutes had been waging a wordy combat with a young man at his side.

"What we want," he growled, "is more eddication or none at all."

"It seems to me, brother," the other replied in a voice whose refined tones attracted Anholt's attention, "that we're doing pretty well as it is. We're getting more schools every year and——."

"That's jist it, Davey," the older man broke in; "it's schools, schools, schools, and they don't teach no more today than they did when I was a kid, exceptin' music and sich like trinkets. I mean the free schools! They teach the youngsters jist enough to make 'em want more and that means if they get it the old man's got to mortgage the farm and dig. Billy Jones goes to public school and he's poor, and Billy Smith goes and he's rich. Then they get through high school and they're told if they want to

know more to plank down the green. So Billy Smith, who don't want to know nothin' more goes off to college because his old man's got the dough and says so, and Billy Jones, who ain't got the spondulix wants to go and can't—and there you are. They're both sore and neither gets what he wants. It's like givin' a hungry man a plate of soup and lettin' him look on't the turkey and pie. 'Tain't right, Davey, 'tain't right! It's aggravatin' and temptin'! 'Tain't in human nature for one feller standin' to see another one get his brain chucked full because he's got the price, and him havin' to knock off jist when he's gettin' interested."

Anholt, who felt as if he were listening to a rough and tumble dissertation on his own particular hobby, could not resist the temptation to have a word in the discussion.

"Pardon me," he observed; "but am I correct in inferring that you advocate government control of the higher institutions of learning—universities and the like?"

The old man, turned and looked at the shadowy face and figure of the speaker. "I don't know what you infer," he retorted, "but I do say a man ought to get as good an eddication free as he gets if he pays for it. Let them as wants to pay, pay; and let 'em have colleges, but them as can't pay has got the right to schoolin' jist as good. This government's rich enough to back its lads up when they've got the brains, but ain't got the cash. If a youngster's got the sense he's got as much right to be a doctor or a law shark free, as the dummy has that gets his papers now with nothin' in his head but hot air. Then the old man at home can have a bust once in a while hisself."

"The trouble is, Sam," commented the young fellow addressed as Davey; "by the time the poor boy gets through high school he's needed at home to help out."

"He ain't, nuther!" snorted the other. "If the old folks can stand it that long they can stand it a while longer, specially when he'll be satisfied and worth somethin' when he's through. As 'tis, he mopes around and ain't worth nothin' and that's how he winds up, jist like me and you—nothin'!"

"Still," said Anholt, hoping to draw him out still further; "some of our most successful men never got beyond the high or grammar schools."

"No," returned Sam," and some didn't get no schoolin' at all. That ain't sayin' they wouldn't ha' been bigger men if they'd knowed more, and it ain't sayin' we wouldn't have a heap more winners if we give 'em a chance. Mark my words, there's goin' to be a time when a man can learn what he wants, whether he's got the dough or not, and when that time comes there won't be no sich hollerin' about the poor downtrod,"—a prediction to which, as the philosopher arose to borrow another pipe, Anholt offered a fervent "Amen," adding to himself: "Anholt, old chap, you're not quite the original genius you thought, eh?"

"That lad, Davey," explained Jerry later, after the object of his remark and his companion of the morning had finished a quiet conversation, of which, despite his efforts he failed to grasp the gist, "he's studyin' fer a commission. He was one of us onct, but now he's the whole thing in the store. The Adjutant wouldn't stand fer nobody throwin' him down. He's white, Davey is!"—a remark which Anholt many times in years to come remembered, and the truth of which he more than once confirmed. As he learned afterward, the lad's history had not been altogether an enviable one. Delivered at birth to the whims of a capricious fate, his little, rosy-tinted form had been discovered by an officer at the Chicago Union Station, sleeping peacefully in a common wicker basket tucked beneath a seat. Snugly ensconced amid a wealth of dainty flannel wrappings, all of which were devoid of marks indicating ownership, the precious bundle had been gingerly carried by its discoverer to the nearest police station, and from there passed on to a convenient foundling institution. Here, in time, and by a process of reasoning as yet entirely unexplained, he became handicapped by the gratuitous imposition of a name—David Goliath Eastman, which was immediately abbreviated for the sake of convenience to the simpler form of Davey. With the flight of time the various stages of his growth were marked by the transferring of the little waif from one institution to another, until at last, turned loose, a newsboy on the streets, his conception of the moral code might reasonably have been expected to be considerably confused. So, too, with the obdurate facts of his grim

experience and necessity fresh upon his mind, adherence to that fixed principle of institution nurtured youths—"every man for himself and the devil take the hindermost"—might with equal reason been expected. Like unto the ways, though, of modern political chieftains, the probable and logical were relegated along with precedent to an obscure corner of life's hall, available later, of course, should expediency demand; while idealistic theories and platforms fathered by wishes instead of unrelenting facts, formed the glittering, but illusive bait with which, as years went by, he had in vain endeavored to tempt success; the result being much as was the case with Anholt. His platform, too badly carpentered, had gone to smash, leaving him, as a result of the catastrophe, among the flotsam of the human race. With a mentality inferior to Anholt's in brilliancy, and with neither the latter's experience nor dogged determination to compel eventual success, he had accepted his last rebuff as a direct mandate from Providence to subordinate his interests, theories and ambitions to the religious necessities of the times. Disregarding his personal predilections for a career implying at least a modicum of the praise and admiration of his fellowmen, he avowed his intention of qualifying as a disciple in the Holy cause; an avowal explaining both his present situation and the easily discernible feeling of respect entertained toward him by his present associates of less spiritual inclinations. In figure slight, the symmetrical features, the dark blue eyes and light colored, curling hair, gave rise in the minds of those conversant with his past, to curious conjectures both as to his parentage and future life. In the appearance of no other habitué of the basement rendezvous was there a sign of anything but the common story of misfortune attributable to moral weakness, drink, financial reverses and the like. And yet the very fact of their being here, as willing workers for such comforts as they had, placed them one niche higher in the social wall than were their brethren on the street. Nay, more than this. In them Anholt found living arguments to support opinions he had formed. Not a man here raised his voice against mere wealth, as such; not one placed the responsibility for his present woes at a more fortunate person's door; not one but felt he had his just deserts; not one approved the preachings of a creed that promised them material wealth

at another man's expense; not one who did not feel that while equal advantages should be granted all to equip themselves for life's campaign, with such concession made, one should in honor, then keep still—believing that contestants starting equal in the race would end precisely in the order of their ability and strength; a contest farcical in the extreme if disgruntled losers should insist on an equal participation in the prize. And—strange that confirmation of his views should come from men like these—not one believed that money, social rating, or any man's decree could rightly figure as a basis on which to start the race. They held the only test of man is mind. Success and failure; happiness, sorrow and shame; mistakes and faults; commissions and omissions—all, are subordinate to, and because of, the workings of the brain. What a startling commentary this, on modern socialistic aims! What subtle irony, that men like these, self respecting to a degree, compelling them to earn the little they received, should display a sense of honor and of justice beyond the ken of radicals who denounce and rant at men of means, and whose promise of substantial revenues without adequate service rendered, constitutes their chief asset in trade; of social agitators to whom materialism is the all in all—the Alpha and Omega of one's life; of men too narrow-minded to perceive that wealth more often is an incident along the path and not the Temple of Desire toward which, standing at the journey's end, the steps are really turned! In Anholt's mind a faint suspicion had begun to work—a vague conjecture that perhaps his presence here was by a Providential wish. He longed to take these men into his confidence; to explain his ideas and his hopes. He knew their comments, blunt and to the point, would still be honest and perhaps of use. He wondered what their thoughts would be, if today they were told to take their places in the social scale, regardless of possessions, heredity or age—the sole test resting on their mental and obviously on their moral worth. If one should find his sphere above a multimillionaire; another down approximately to the lowest grade, would they then, although now satisfied to reap the harvest they had sown, be more or less content—be satisfied with the assurance that it rested now with them alone to say how near the topmost circle they would go? If that man, having children somewhere, now in

school, should find them later higher in the scale than he could get, would it render him happier or the reverse? And so his thoughts ran on, while a due regard for the propriety of things induced a caution and reserve in speech. One thing was manifest. These men concurred in his contention that intelligence should play a larger part in the regulation of society. So far, so good. But to force a recognition of this truth to a point where it should become a substantial, controlling and permanent factor; to insure the taking of the medicine essential to the cure; to have classes actually defined and to pave the way for grading people in them, and then to arrange the terms of their progression in a manner equitable to all—there lay the monster problem of them all.

"Well, anyhow," he reflected; "if I ever test this vision out the community will have to be almighty small—and incidentally," he added thoughtfully, "if there are to be any survivors the police department will have to dance to a merry tune."

Discouraged partly by Davey, and partly by his own aversion to leaving his present work with its opportunities for character study, until he had secured a position to some extent commensurate with his ability and requirements, he notified the directory concern of his decision not to accept the employment promised him; a matter of indifference doubtless to them, and a loss to him only in so far as it deprived him of another interesting experience in the study of human idiosyncrasies and ethics. Prompt, faithful and willing in the routine of his daily tasks; meeting his co-workers on a plane of equality, and restraining every inclination to moralize to them, except when directly approached, he won from them as was his wont in whatever class he moved, their friendship and regard.

From Dorothy came soul-refreshing letters of love, encouragement and faith; from Marie Von Bonhorst, short epistles breathing gratitude and hope; from Bishop and Storey, long accounts of their labors and results, with here and there suggestions as to alterations and improvements in their Utopian scheme. Once a short note came from Bob, telling of the increased volume of his cigar and paper sales—a communication particularly interesting to Anholt because of the decided improvement in chirography, orthography, and in the general style of its composition. Appreciat-

ing his friends' thoughtfulness, and inspired by their letters, he searched unceasingly for suitable employment. In his brief acknowledgments of their communications he was most guarded—so far as wording was concerned. Fearful lest they might divine his real extremity by his dropping of some contradictory word, he thanked them for remembering him, promised to reply more fully later on, and stopped. Just now the matter of postage was no unimportant item, especially when his replies to the various help wanted advertisements required immediate mailing if they were to receive consideration at the advertisers' hands. Time and again he received an answer requesting him to call; an invitation invariably supplemented by that dread notation, "Bring references along."

But persistent, dogged effort has its day, and so at last Anholt observed the winter's sun was shining overhead. An opening was given him; one where brains meant promotion and where references were of secondary consideration; one that took him from the Salvation Army wagon to a position as letter writer in a huge mail order house; one that transformed him from a virtual dependent of a practical charity to a correspondent at a living wage.

With the rapid flight of time he was moved from one branch of the correspondence department to another. Letters classed under the heads of inquiries, complaints, adjustments, delayed shipments, transportation—he was initiated into the mysteries of them all, and learned that each must be handled and answered along carefully defined and established lines. He studied hard to grasp the details of his work; to secure a perfect understanding of why each letter must be answered thus and so; to do first of all the duties entrusted to his hands—to do them well, and then to do at least a little more. Here, as elsewhere, a policy of this kind was shown to pay a hundred fold. Keen and progressive men were on the lookout for new blood. The employee who knew was told to show the other man.

CHAPTER III.

By whatever divergent methods we undertake to solve its origin, or to explain its subtle, positive, logic defying influence, the simple fact of its existence became long ago a matter of universal concession. The "it" referring to that feeling, intuition, presentiment, divination—call it what you will, that, rapid as the light beam's progress assumes its tenancy in the brain at the exact instant of our introduction to the individual whose presence brings the sense to life, and so informs us that somehow, somewhere, sometime, this person will prove the means of altering the current of our lives. One of the least explicable of mental phenomena, it bears in its truest sense no relation to that quality of personal magnetism enabling one man to largely dominate and influence the actions of another. It is not an aggressive, but a passive factor in the working out of our destiny. It is quiet, unobtrusive, inscrutable—an enigma solvable by time alone. The most insignificant and puny of the human kind will instil this consciousness in our minds as surely as the person of great mentality, attractive physique or dynamic personality. It springs into being at the least expected times and under conditions frequently entirely commonplace. It comes with the man—or woman; with the first handshake or spoken word. We cannot evade it. We can only pray that it presages us no ill. A prayer that Anholt, thinking later of the person talking with him now, gave voice to in sincere, if muffled words.

The man had first approached him asking for a job, the bestowal of which he, as head of a division, was expected to make or not, as he felt conditions justified. The intonation of the applicant's voice had attracted him at once. Plainly an Englishman, the accent of the Londoner had been tempered as if by an extended colonial experience. Probably five feet nine in height, his body was inclined to stoutness. His hair, light brown, was parted exactly in the middle. Short cropped side whiskers extended to the lobe of either ear. Two large moles, one on the left side of his chin, the other to the right of his nose, tended to disfigure the face which was inclined to puffiness. The moustache had evidently been in recent contact

with the curling irons. The eyes were blue and heavy; the lips, sensual; the nose verged slightly—very slightly to the retroussé. Not overly intelligent, his countenance suggested a rambling, perhaps a wayward life. His complexion, naturally pink, was tanned as if by recent exposure to a tropical sun. In attire he was neat and clean—one might assume fastidious. His suit was of a pronouncedly London cut; his shoes and bowler hat had unquestionably been purchased in the States. Altogether an average specimen of his kind—the harum-scarum offshoot of a solid English family, who had rolled around the world as fancy willed, occasionally disturbing the family peace by unexpected visits home, and never, despite his moral uncleanliness, without his sponge, tooth brush and comb. Such, at least, he appeared to be.

Anholt, endeavoring to analyze the singular impression produced on his mind by the stranger, and smiling inwardly at the unaccountable premonition of danger flitting across his brain, listened in silence to the applicant's presentation of his case.

"So you're from New Zealand, eh?" he interrogated when the other paused. "Did you come here direct?"

"I stopped with my cousin in Scotland for a time. He's a broker on the Provincial Exchange in Edinburgh, but consols are low and your jolly troubles here don't help them any, so I came on to look around."

"I see," remarked Anholt, "from frying pan to fire."

"Well, rather!" and the natty individual who had introduced himself as Mr. S. Landseer Dubledіehl, extracted his handkerchief from its recess in his cuff, and applied it gently to his nose. "Oh, I say!" he exclaimed suddenly; "I must tell you. I was an auctioneer in Wellington—used to make my four and five guineas a day, then. You're looked up to in that business in the Colonies. I thought I might follow it in the States, but it's like being a costermonger here, don't you know? and——."

"Y-e-s, it's hardly a gentleman's vocation," replied Anholt with an ironical inflection lost on the Englishman.

"Right O!" the latter agreed promptly. "I tried for a fair screw in a New York bank. I was a clerk"—he paused and looked wonderingly

at the other who smiled at his distinctively English pronunciation of the word—"at Smith's in London."

"What made you quit?" asked Anholt, eyeing him closely.

"I—Oh! I went to Australia. Anyhow," he added quickly, "that was dealing in pounds, shillings and pence, and I didn't have the run of your money here."

"How about the brandy and soda?" Again the man started as he caught the piercing eyes studying him.

"Humph! Well to be honest"—fumbling his hat—"I've been an ass, but it's all over—quite, I assure you. I haven't touched a drop since I left Leicester Square."

"You mean Princess Street," corrected Anholt.

"No, London," insisted Dubledіehl. "My cousin took me down for a toot before I boarded ship."

"Yes?" The inquisitor speculated as to what feeling, if any but relief, induced the farewell sendoff. Suddenly he pushed his chair back, and standing, looked down determinedly in the other's face.

"You've just lied to me, man! You've been looking on the Scotch before you came up here—but let that go. You're broke now, you say, and I know what that means to a fellow in a foreign land. I'm going to give you a try out. Better jump in now. How?"—looking interrogatively at the Englishman, who apparently had some question on his mind requiring immediate settlement.

"I'm sorry, Mr.——Anholt," as the latter supplied the name, "but about salary. My landlady is——."

"We'll fix that later, Dubledіehl, with her. You'll get fifteen dollars a week to start with. That's the best we do. Take my advice and grab it if you're in the hole you say. Simmons,"—calling to the nearest correspondent—"this is Mr. Dubledіehl, who will work on the delayed shipment stuff. Better let him study our catalogue for the balance of the day."

As the employee, already starting to frame up some witty comment on the new man's name, showed the latter to his desk, Anholt reseated himself with the mental observation: "Do unto others and judge not, Van, to which you'd better supplement the practising of such precepts as you

endorse." As days passed into weeks he watched the Englishman's progress, and in time began to think his forebodings had been at fault. By no means rapid either in preparing or dictating his replies, the new man was careful beyond the ordinary. His lack of punctuality in beginning his daily work, noticeable at first, had gradually been remedied, while so far as one could see he abstained altogether from the captivating cup. Once or twice vague rumors went the rounds, of his undue familiarity with the female stenographers called to take dictation at his desk—rumors unsubstantiated, however, either by direct complaint or by tangible evidence, and therefore, to Anholt's mind, deserving of no credence. Meanwhile, Dublediehl had neglected to repay the money advanced him for the purpose of bridging his immediate needs; a sacrifice which had been greater on Anholt's part than on the surface would appear, inasmuch as he had drawn it from a reserve fund consecrated to the re-establishment of his home and the re-enthronement of Dorothy therein. But the Englishman was entirely ignorant of his benefactor's financial stringency; "and then," as Anholt had observed to himself in seeking excuses for the other's laxity, "he probably started so deep in the rut that he hasn't paid out yet with the creditors who pushed him to the limit"—a reflection afterward appearing ludicrous in view of his more extensive understanding of the man. As for himself, with his inherent tendency toward an extravagant generosity, he experienced no little difficulty in discriminating between pure selfishness and a rational expenditure of one's means; that is, a policy implying the conservation of our resources without disregarding the ordinary comforts and requirements of our lives. He preferred, therefore, until undeceived, to regard Dublediehl as a follower of the latter principle in regulating his personal affairs, and trusted that in line with this policy he would, as circumstances permitted, voluntarily liquidate the indebtedness standing between them. Reserved and uncommunicative to the verge of boorishness on all pertaining to his personal career, the foreigner's portrayals of places and public events which had come under his observation, were rich in coloring and bore witness to his roving, variegated past. Only once had he lapsed from his secretive mood, the exception being due to the necessity for his providing a satisfactory pre-

lude to his description of some thrilling Australasian affair—a deviation, however, bearing in time the strangest and most unexpected fruit. On a P. & O. steamer, outbound for the Orient, Dubledieh1 and an uncle, both registered for Auckland, via Melbourne, had been heavy winners in the daily pools. Following an unusually successful auction of the lot drawn numbers, they had one night paced the deck, discussing their luck and their prospective future as New Zealand stockmen. His uncle—banker for the pair—growing sleepy, decided to turn in. With a cheery "Good-night!" he left his nephew, and descending from the promenade to the main deck, headed ostensibly for his room and berth. A half hour later, Dubledieh1, after a 'nightcap' in the smoking room, followed the older man's example and was speedily lost in a sound and uninterrupted sleep. His uncle was never seen again. The condition of his stateroom, examined carefully the following morning, proved conclusively that he had never retired to rest. His disappearance was a mystery apparently as unsolvable as a woman's mind, and—so the nephew now declared—the reason for, and the precursor of, grave hardships to himself. Thus his version of the tragedy ran. On the authority of what facts could the passengers then, or Anholt now, have based their experience of incredulity and disbelief?

Probably the most insistent as unquestionably it was the most censurable trait in the man's makeup was his pronounced cynicism. Resolutely ignoring the admirable qualities of the men about him, he remained fully alive to their shortcomings, and these he emphasized to the exclusion of whatever virtues they possessed. With the persistency and unreasonableness characterizing a perverted moral sense he developed all the elements of the twentieth century "knocker." Although cautious by reason of a due regard for his physical configuration, he revelled in indirect aspersions and thinly veiled innuendoes derogatory to this man and that. He played no favorites; all was grist that fell into his mill. Anholt himself, who delicately suggested the advisability of the Englishman's cessation of his condemnable tactics, became a target for the poisoned shafts. Broad minded and attributing this unenviable idiosyncrasy to some disease lurking in the organism of the fellow's brain, he deferred the adoption of a drastic course, having no desire to be charged with

profiting by his position to avenge what might be termed a fancied wrong. Dubledіehl performed his duties in a creditable manner. As with Anholt he shouldered the burden of a somewhat checkered past, but unlike him suffered a moral irregularity of the most despicable nature—one that must inevitably prove disastrous to himself. Patience and consideration, though, might do more good than kicks—another Anholt theory that time was to demonstrate as being ridiculously false. Among the victims of this human spring of insidious and subtly worded reflections on the characters of honest men, was David Eastman, between whom and Anholt a warm and mutually profitable friendship had taken root, and who, meeting the Englishman occasionally in his friend's company, had evinced an interest in his history and progress. Not so diplomatic as his former associate in the Salvation Army work, in rounding the dangerous corners of another man's moral build, but equally consistent and sincere in his endeavor to lead him into righteous ways, he had readily deciphered the infirmities of Dubledіehl's mind and as promptly attempted to correct them by kindly, well-meant arguments; the result being that Eastman, smaller physically than the Englishman, was consigned by the latter straight to the devil, while the distorted mind began vigorously to formulate an adequate revenge for this unsolicited criticism of his moral delinquencies. Neither Anholt nor his friend believed that the other's resentment would take the form of anything more than words—a conception of his character, which, if erroneous, might in time result in unpleasantness for them both. But as days went by with no discoverable effort on his part to cause injury to one or both, they felt confirmed in their diagnosis of the man.

And so matters ran. Laughing, exuberant Spring, dancing joyously across the stage of time, now stood bowing her adieu; while buxom Summer with matronly air, considerately paused behind the wings, awaiting her precursor's exit. To Anholt it was a season rich in promise. Steadfastly persisting in the narrow course mapped out, and veering neither to the right nor left, he had resolutely refrained from compromising himself by making promises difficult of fulfillment, and had resisted with equal pertinacity tempting inducements offered here and there to increase through speculative channels his small but growing

means. Setting aside a moiety of his income for living purposes and charitable uses, he had husbanded the balance, aside from that sent for Dorothy's support, against the time when it would total a sum warranting her return to him. The spirit of conservatism, heretofore a negligible phase of his character, appeared to flourish in this most deceptive soil—a growth that Anholt, surprised at its vigor, began to watch with gratified and interested eyes. Not that he was satisfied with his prospects as they stood—much less with the inadequate remuneration received for his present work. But his condition now as compared with that of the early winter showed an improvement so distinct as precluded a disinclination on his part to profit by the lesson taught. Prepared to advantage himself as opportunity presented, he proposed to view its coming with a critical, cautious eye, and to make assurance doubly sure before he took firm hold. He knew that Storey, Hope and Bishop watched his progress with anxious and scrutinizing, albeit hopeful minds, and in the voluminous correspondence passing between them now he discerned the feeling of intense relief his conscientious efforts had brought to them. And if at times he received through circuitous channels communications prohibiting forgetfulness of the troubles he had once endured, as well as prophesying more to come, he looked upon them with a calmness arising from the firm conviction of his own integrity and a swerveless purpose to indemnify all creditors in time against financial loss. Next to Dorothy's comforting words his greatest pleasure was found in the receipt by him of certain ungrammatical, misspelled and sometimes slangy lines, whose tedious framing doubtless had been provocative of more than one half uttered oath, but every line and dot of which breathed gratitude and messages of good will.

Anholt was well within the middle of his course and swimming to the high embankment straight ahead—the shore on which, as victor in the race, he could stand erect, beholden to no man, and thus surrounded by his old and time-proved friends work out in peace his cherished theory for human good.

CHAPTER IV.

"Here, you fellows!—Caldwell, Jones, Lercher, everybody—dig in and smoke up; they're the goods all right! Hold on there, Dubledieh!! I didn't say to take 'em all," as the man addressed scooped a handful of Perfectos from the box in Anholt's hand.

With a sheepish look the Englishman replaced all but three. "Humph!" he started to explain. "I was only wanting to help pass them around."

"Well, you're not barred yet!" and the speaker glanced meaningly at the fellow's avaricious fist. "Come on, you buggers," addressing the group again; "do you think they're loaded? That's the music!" as the last hanger-back among the correspondents gathered around Anholt's desk, stepped up and relieved the box of its final cigar. "Can you light up? Sure, go ahead— you've got twenty minutes yet." Then, following a pause during which the striking of matches, long-drawn puffs and low but audible "Ahs" prevailed, he exclaimed, "Well, are you duffers dumb? Why don't you ask me something, somebody?"

A tall, lank, red-haired individual, appropriately called "Reddy," who had been gazing contemplatively at the ceiling, as the bluish smoke issued from his lips and curled gracefully skyward, now turned his eyes on Anholt. "To tell the truth," he said slowly, "I, for one, didn't have the nerve. Of course, maybe you only swiped a returned "N. G." box. I'd hate to insult you by venturing it was a hot shot on the ponies, or—by gum! it is—it's a kid! Good boy! Shake!" Reading a confirmation of his guess in his superior's happy face, he stepped forward, extended his long arm over the heads of the clerks standing in front of him, and seizing the newly-made father's hand, worked it vigorously, as he would the handle of a pump.

"Boy or girl?" somebody asked, as the rotation of congratulations and handshakes continued. The one addressed, perplexed by the question, suddenly let his arm fall limp.

"How in thunder do I know?" he answered in a savage tone. "Do you think I get the story of hi—er—its life in a ten-word wire?"

"Easiest thing you know," offered Caldwell, a pudgy fellow with a heart big as a barn. "Ten words is a good and plenty, since there's nothing to its life but that—is it a he, or is it a she? I suggest you ask it over the 'phone what it is and let us know."

"Hm!" the red-headed chap broke in, rubbing his chin thoughtfully; "that's seven and a quarter to New York—that's the center of the universe now, isn't it, Anholt? Better wait till night; it's half rates then; also, the kid, being older, can explain its sex and general impressions of the country more coherently, as it were, to dad."

"If some of you fellows weren't so almighty funny," exclaimed Simmons, who could be serious enough at times, "you'd know what a man's thinking about in a deal like this is the good wife, and not the he-ism or she-ism of the baby. That's what interests me, anyhow," and he turned, looking inquiringly at Anholt. The latter's hand, shooting forth like a flash, caught his in a warm and hearty grip.

"She's fine and dandy, Simmons—thanks! Anyhow," he added haltingly, "so the telegram said."

For some reason the words of Simmons had tended to put a quietus on his companions' thoughtless but good-natured raillery, as indeed they proved a temporary damper to the extravagant paternal enthusiasm of their chief. As for Dubledіehl, so engrossed was he in the contents of a foreign-posted letter handed him by the office runner at the moment the good fortune of Anholt was declared, that he neither heard the "joshing" to which his benefactor was being subjected, nor observed the thoughtful mien which had succeeded to the latter's demonstrative mood. It is doubtful whether in the minds of any save Anholt himself a thought of the Englishman's rude and inconsiderate attitude occurred. He had so thoroughly ostracized himself from their society and consideration, by reason of his selfishness and unpardonable, as well as apparently motiveless, reflections cast indiscriminately on them all, that by tacit agreement he was completely ignored—a condition of affairs that aggravated, rather than modified, his childish spite.

If, up to this time he had failed to taste the dust of the adjoining alley, his luck was attributable more to Anholt's understood determination to discharge the first correspondent resorting to physical extremes with the fellow, than because of any regard for the personal inconvenience an exertion of the kind necessarily implied.

"I can't make the animal out," Caldwell had once remarked, during a discussion of some sneering allusion made by Dubledichl reflecting on Anholt's economical mode of life. "You'd think, being a stranger here, he'd try to line up a bunch of friends, instead of plugging away with his hammer twenty-four hours out of the day. My dope is that he's ratty. It stands to reason no sane man would knock at everybody for the love of it."

"Yes," supplemented Simmons, "and he puts it out in a way that makes his words put down in black and white look innocent enough. I wish Anholt would fire him. He's caused more discord since he's been here than I've seen in my five years with the house."

"He's too smooth an article for our class," commented Caldwell.

"And," said Reddy, "as crooked as a ram's horn."

All of this will give a fairly accurate idea of his fellow workers' opinion of the man. Anholt's thoughts, alternating between the possibility of complications in his wife's condition on one side, and his increasing disappointment at the Englishman's inexcusable conduct on the other, were interrupted finally by the ringing of the bell calling the force to their tasks. Immediately the noticeable familiarity between himself and the men under his direction, was lost in the atmosphere of a rigid discipline. The line dividing superior from subordinate was observed on the latter's part with a promptness and cheerfulness eloquent of the regard in which Anholt was held.

Turning to his desk he noticed a Manila envelope stuck in a corner of the blotter and addressed to him. As numbers of these, bearing on one phase or another of his routine work reached him daily, there was nothing astonishing in its appearance, and, if he eyed it curiously before breaking the seal it was because, instead of the customary A. V. A., adopted as a means of saving time, a formal Mr. Anholt appeared thereon. Opening

it his eyes travelled rapidly along the few curt lines. His face, before the signature was reached, assumed a death-like pallor. Dropping into his seat with the perspiration standing boldly on his forehead, his dry lips gave utterance to a half moan, followed by words audible to none around.

"Oh, my God! to strike me now—at such a time as this! Oh, God! it's awful, *awful.*" The communication, falling from his hands, fluttered to the floor. He sat, for a minute, staring into nothingness, a prey to sickening thoughts—thoughts that fell like some hideous, monstrous burden on his heart. Then with a long drawn sigh he roused himself to action, and leaning over picked the paper up, reading it through once more. It ran:

MR. ANSON VAN ANHOLT.

Dear Sir—Your services, beginning July 1st, two weeks hence, will be no longer required. To anticipate a probable request from you I would add that to employees from whom we exact no references, we grant none. The reason to you will be obvious. You will doubtless be able to explain your leaving us as a natural result of the advancing dull season, and to your being comparatively a new man with us. As this action is final on our part, and as we have no explanation to make, I trust you will refrain from calling our attention further to the matter. I may add that your services have been satisfactory.

Yours truly,

ALEXANDER DODGE,
General Manager.

The re-reading caused Anholt greater suffering than before. Leaving his desk he sought seclusion by an open window in the hall. Here, cooled by the breezes wafted from the lake, he stood with gloomy eyes and contracted brow, a martyr to his devotion shown to principles of right.

"To think—Oh God! to think, that I can't demand a single explanatory word. My record ties me hand and foot. The meanest laborer insists on having as a right, what I, though my soul's salvation is at stake, daren't plead for as a favor on my knees. Oh, gentle, merciful Christ! how long yet must I bear this punishment for my sins? What further sacrifice or misery on my part does the God of Wrath demand? What unhappiness and shame before I've paid the price of peace?"

His thoughts wandered toward the distant east. His mind's eye caught the picture of a room—a bed; of a pale faced, saint-like figure, from whose tender, trustful eyes the light of a proud and happy motherhood shone forth; whose arms lovingly embraced a treasured babe; whose thoughts were with him, wondering what pleasure he derived from the knowledge of her precious gift; who hungered for his presence and counted the hours between herself and him—and home; who was thanking her Savior for His guidance of the one she loved, to righteous ways—to honorable and steady work; who impatiently craved permission to write him just a line and tell him of the sweetest, healthiest and best natured baby in all the great, wide world. And so his thoughts ran on, chasing one another across his brain, and stinging it as if in mockery at his woes, while long conquered tears, given liberty at last, coursed down his cheeks—silent tributes to his manliness and worth. Finally he lifted his head, shook it as if to rid the face of its evidence of grief, tried bravely to assume a smile, and started back to work.

"It's tough, old chap!"—he reflected thus. "It might be worse though; besides, she's well and—stop that!" as a lump again mounted to his throat. 'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady' yet, nor kept her, man, especially with a brood. Hold your job down right; that comes first, and meantime —get another."

If the general manager, passing through the office later in the day, glanced at Anholt's face, expecting to discover traces either of annoyance or resentment, his fears—or hopes, were quickly put at rest.

Ten minutes before the closing bell rang out, the worried man, having finished the dictation of a mass of letters, whirled his chair around to find Dubledіehl, standing near him, awaiting opportunity to speak.

"All right, Dubledіehl! what is it?"

"You're not engaged for dinner tonight, are you? No! Then I hope you'll dine with me—anywhere you say. It's most important, I assure you."

An invitation so startling; so unprecedented; so utterly at variance with anything he had ever known the man to do, caused Anholt to discredit his hearing and look rather dazedly in the other's face. "Pardon me," he said, "I didn't quite catch that—right."

"I asked you to honor me by acting as my guest at dinner. Fact is," continued the Englishman, "I've got some bally good news. Something capital for both of us. It's worth determining your contract here. Yes? Right O! What say to The States at seven?"

So the engagement was made. Not that Anholt experienced any confidence in Dubledіehl's ability to "make good" on the one, and to him by far the most interesting statement; but first, because he had nothing else on hand, and secondly, because he wanted the solution of the riddle—to ascertain what circumstance or combination of circumstances had contributed to this ebullition of hospitality on the part of his prospective host.

As Dubledіehl turned away, Anholt extracted a telegram from his well worn pocketbook and perused it for the hundredth time. "If that doesn't spell woman to the dot"—communing with himself—"then I'm a happy jigger! They must have those ten words—but eleven—three cents more—never in a thousand years! And a man would make the job complete with four. Well, well! those are the things that make them dear to us." His eyes rested fondly on the message, sent him by Marie Von Bonhorst, and worded as follows:

"Fine baby just arrived. Dorothy and child both doing well."

Three hours later he gazed thoughtfully across the expanse of snow white linen, from which all save liqueur glasses had been removed. Dubledіehl, who had been refolding the letter which his guest had carefully—very carefully read over for the second time, returned it to his pocket.

"That looks good,Dubledіehl, I'll admit." The words followed a long series of perfect wreaths of smoke. "I'm satisfied from what you said before, that the gear's all right. The question is, can your cousin put the deal through?"

"Humph! He'll get all he wants from the English company's stockholders in Scotland. Don't you see he's got the underwriting promised? They're like a pack of hounds up there, since they've smelled that ten shilling jump," and Dubledіehl grunted again, as if astounded at the raising of a question of the kind. In fact, this propensity to preface his remarks, and at times add to them with anywhere from one to a number of grunts, tended to substantiate Reddy's claim that there was "more of hog in the

Englishman than in many a porker served with 'beans *and*' "—a comparison more intelligible to an habitué of Chicago Jake's than to a feaster of the upper crust.

Anholt's understanding of the situation, as gathered both from his former conversations with Dubledichl and from the contents of the exhaustive communication just submitted him, was about as follows: A German—Adolph Schnelhauser by name, had invented and patented what had been styled the Schnelhauser Gear. While hardly involving a new principle in mechanics it nevertheless signalized a new era in its particular field, and both on the Continent and in Great Britain was rapidly supplanting all former types. Dubledichl's cousin, as an active agent in the flotation of the company controlling the English patents, had long been dissatisfied with his small holdings in what had developed into a decidedly lucrative business. Feeling that he had received the short end of the bargain from his associates, he had recently turned toward the American field with covetous eyes, scenting an opening not only to refill his more or less depleted pockets, but to turn the tables on the financiers who heretofore had outmaneuvered him. It is not for us to pass upon the ethics of his attitude or upon the merits of his controversy with the men who formerly had co-operated with him. Certain it is, however, that the controlling shareholders in the English company were residents of Scotland, and that he, as a broker, was in direct touch with most of them; a fact tending to support his contention that his profits had been in exact inverse ratio to his efforts and influence in securing the stock subscriptions. Be that as it may, he had now determined to secure the American rights, organize a company, file his prospectus in Somerset House, go to the public, and after adequately compensating himself in the way of shares and cash, trust the company's welfare to Providence and Yankee business brains. This naturally, involved no inconsiderable amount of secrecy in his preliminary moves. It likewise involved his providing himself with pertinent data covering the condition of this class of industry in the States —the demand, cost to manufacture, probable selling price, prospective profits, and so on. It was quite essential that this information be up-to-date and, if possible, backed up in person by its compiler; for the canny Scotsman is no easy nut to crack, even in the hands of friends. All of

the above helps to bring us now, closer to the point. S. Landseer Dubledіehl had written his cousin, Frederick G. Dubledіehl, concerning Anholt, and, singularly enough in a flattering vein—so he claimed, at least. Here was the broker's cue. Anholt should be induced to provide the data, map out the proposed company's policy along American lines, make the trip to Scotland and assist by his presence in engineering the deal. In return for this he was to be handsomely provided for, presumably as managing director; receive a slice of the shares or cash, plus a generous salary as an officer, and be given exclusive control of the business in the States. S. Landseer Dubledіehl would, of course, have a finger in the pie. Such is a synopsis of the plot as outlined to Anholt in the rathskeller of the Chicago restaurant. To him, the matter as a business proposition appeared worthy of consideration. The field for a corporation of this kind, conservatively capitalized, was undoubtedly as large in America as in either England or Germany. The business had paid heavy dividends in those countries—therefore it could certainly do so here. If the plan as disclosed was carried to a successful issue it meant the beginning of his financial rehabilitation and a welcome escape from the embarrassment of his present situation. How far should he permit the motives behind the broker's acts to influence him? Or should he consider them at all, seeing that it would be solely by reason of their existence that he could hope to advantage himself through the flotation of the new company—a company which would assuredly be organized whether he participated in the preliminaries or not? Conversant as he was with the Companies' Acts of Great Britain, he was satisfied that whatever his own or the broker's profits might be, they must first have the approval of the shareholders. The conditions under which the English prospectus is issued abundantly insured this. So far as he could see, the doubtful points were to be found in this: Could he provide the information necessary to an intelligent and convincing understanding of the conditions in America by people who were totally in the dark concerning them, and—if he did provide it, could Dubledіehl's cousin do the rest? Referring to the last, it appeared reasonable to assume that, having been instrumental in floating the English company on the strength of an invention at the time untried, now that its value was clearly demonstrated, no difficulty should be encountered by him in manip-

ulating in a manner satisfactory to all, the deal now under consideration. Certainly, the broker's interests were, in a way, identical with those of Anholt, inasmuch as he had everything to gain by success and nothing by failure. As for Anholt himself, he would be violating none of the pledges made to himself or friends. To all intents and purposes he would be in everything an employee—nothing more, nothing less. He was to influence no capital—to invest no money. In case of failure his position could be no worse than in the present light of things it promised to be. If favored by success he would be satisfactorily taken care of. After all, was he not to observe in this the extended hand of a Divine friend—the mysterious workings of an omniscient mind directed toward furthering his welfare? He was not deceived by the attitude of his host. For the moment their interests were mutual, and in the selfish spirit of the man lay Anholt's assurance of temporary immunity from the poisonous influence of the other's tongue. Despite both his disinclination to affiliate himself in a business transaction with a man of Dubledieh1's stamp, and his strong opposition to lending himself as a tool in the working out of another's scheme of revenge, he felt that expediency now demanded from him concessions along this line, and that his personal feelings should be subjugated to the requirements of a situation which, satisfactorily handled, would terminate so advantageously to himself. The striking developments of the past twenty-four hours—Dorothy's gift, and the notice of his dismissal, were impressed too vividly upon his mind to permit mere prejudice, however well founded, to obtrude itself between him and a promised liberation from his present bondage.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Dubledieh1," he finally exclaimed, after a prolonged threshing out of the pros and cons between the two. "I haven't any money to lose nor time to spare, but I'll write your cousin a letter embodying the conditions under which I'll take this on, and his cabled 'yes' or 'no' will decide the question—so far as I'm concerned. And—I'll want his guarantee to reimburse me for money spent if he loses out on this. You understand that, don't you?"

The Englishman, after a critical inspection of the now presented check, handed the astonished waiter the amount called for, plus a solitary dime. Disregarding the servitor's contemptuous stare, he slowly extracted an

Egyptian cigarette from a silver case, and after lighting it answered indirectly his guest's last words.

"Don't you form any idea that Fred's a bloomin' fool. He's as warm after the fivers as you are and he isn't working for his bally health. By allotment day every share'll be taken, I'll wager twenty quid on that. You leave it to him—Humph!" and following the grunt he proceeded to exhale, first through one nostril and then through the other, a succession of blue white streams of smoke, which, interrupted in their downward course by contact with the table cloth, spread gradually over its glossy surface and then, impelled by natural laws, wafted their way ceilingward, leaving a disagreeable reminder of their presence in Anholt's eyes and nose. This, being an accomplishment of which Dubledichl was inordinately proud, he had come to consider it as an integral part of his meals—a special course as it were, no less enjoyed by his fellow diners than by himself. Whatever spirit of curiosity the suggested wager may have produced in Anholt's mind, it remained unsatisfied by any disclosure of the source from which his host's implied wealth was derived. Nor—let it be here stated—was he made cognizant of a certain fact that tended materially to advance his interests in the contemplated company organization and flotation—namely, that Dubledichl's cousin, having by reason of certain obligations incurred, been prohibited from operating personally on the Edinburgh Exchange until said debts were paid, and being thereby temporarily deprived of his principal source of income, must, of necessity, engineer some new deal of sufficient magnitude to place him on his feet. This, of course, meant fat for Anholt if he chose to assist in the decapitation of the goose. But more of this anon.

"I don't question your cousin's intentions," he said at last, pushing back his chair in signal of departure, "and I'm inclined to concur to some extent in your opinion of his ability, but I propose for once to subordinate sentiment to business. I appreciate the offer made me—it looks good, but if it isn't to be a black and white transaction it won't be anything—with me," and his sharp eyes scrutinized the face of his host.

The latter, startled by the words, and fearful lest his plans miscarry after all, adopted a conciliatory course.

"Right you are!" he replied with a semblance of approval in his tones and manner; "that'll be quite all right—it's business, I should say."

"It *is* business!" retorted the other, shortly.

A half hour later, Anholt, determined to spend the balance of his evening in figuring the situation out, mounted the shabbily carpeted hall steps to his room. Striking a light his eyes fell on a rather dirty envelope bearing his address, propped against a pitcher on the stand.

"Hello!" he muttered, "they're coming in regiments today. I wonder if I'm not seeing things," he added as he surveyed the handwriting with a cautious, analytical eye. "First it's a baby, then it's a 'fire', and now—well, here goes for the climax!" and he ripped the envelope open.

Probably the experiences of the day had left him immune from any feelings of emotion, for he neither started nor passed noticeable comment as he read the following lines:

Dear Mr. Anholt—I am in an awful mess. Will you be kind enough to come and see me? I am locked up in the Harrison Street Station. Please come at once if you can. I am innocent of anything.

Your obedient friend,

DAVID EASTMAN.

Deliberately as if he were starting to his work, Anholt left the room, descended the stairs, and after closing the street door with the utmost caution, headed for the nearest car.

CHAPTER V.

"Just repeat that, Davey, will you—carefully? I'm beginning to catch a glimmer of light."

Anholt's eyes, as they searched the face behind the barred door, gave inkling of a vague and curious suspicion of the truth. His reassuring words, falling like balm upon a tortured heart, inspired the other with renewed hope, encouraging him to search his memory for any detail yet undisclosed.

"It was like this, Mr. Anholt," he began. " Supper was just over, and I was upstairs getting ready to go over to Staff Captain Seltzman's about having that leak in the roof fixed up, when Gus—you remember Gus, the cook?—he came up on the run, and says, 'Davey, somebody telephoned for you over on South State—says to come quick; a woman's dyin' and wants to see you.' He didn't know who 'twas called, but wrote the number and a woman's name down on a piece of paper and give it to me. So I grabbed my Bible and hymn book and shot off to the first car. I found the place all right, and the woman, who was moaning on a bed with pains, sayin' she feared she would die. She said, too, her man had left her, sayin' he would send for somebody to come and look after her. She was right good looking, Mr. Anholt, and I tried to find out just what was ailin' her, when she told me to go to a drawer and take a prescription and fifty cents out of her pocketbook and get it filled quick. I found the prescription, but there wasn't any money there, and not wanting to add to her misery, I didn't say anything about it, but went off to the drug store and paid for it myself. I had to wait a while to get it filled, and when I got back there was an officer waitin' and she was cryin' out I robbed her. She said she had twenty dollars in the pocketbook which she got this morning from putting up a necklace her mother give her. They wouldn't listen to anything I said, so here I am," and Davey, looking anxiously at his friend, awaited an expression of his opinion.

"Did she say who this man of her's was, Davey, or discuss him?"

"No, sir; she wouldn't tell me anything about him."

"What about *her*—did she impress you as really suffering?"

"I'm sure she was sick, Mr. Anholt—yes I remember the druggist said she was in a bad way."

"And about the money? She should have had a pawn ticket if her story was straight."

"She did, sir. I remembered afterward seeing it in her pocketbook; but I didn't take the money, as truly as——."

"I know that, Davey, my boy," interrupted Anholt; "but how about the Army people—have you sent them any word?"

"Not a thing, sir. I sent for you because I—I thought you'd know."

"You did right. Now Davey, let me have that woman's name and address. I suppose the police have the paper—yes? Well you remember it," and pulling the envelope containing Davey's note to him from his pocket, he jotted the address down on its back.

"Now, look here, boy! I can't bail you out tonight. I haven't the money—you know that, and I wouldn't know where to look for a bondsman; but I'll promise you if any complainant appears in court in the morning, it won't be my fault. Can you hold out? Good! Now don't question me, boy, but try to get some sleep. I'm off on a little sleuthing stunt of my own. I'll see you in the morning and—you'll get a decent breakfast, which will help some. About the Army folks—leave that to me. Good night, lad, and stop your worrying."

Three hours later, Anholt, puffing an unusually long and fat cigar, was headed leisurely for his lodgings. "It's a funny, funny proposition"—so his thoughts ran. "The woman's honest enough, and she was robbed—that's a certainty; and there's where the plot begins to thicken. That money was gone when Davey got there. If she'd only open up about that fellow of hers—confound it all! that's an awful suspicion to harbor. It isn't possible—and yet——." Startled by the thought darting across his brain he brought himself to a sudden halt. "Great Father of Mercy! that isn't—no, by the gods it can't be right! You're unbalanced, Anholt; I tell you today's upheaval has got your mind to rocking. What you want is sleep—good and quick. You've saved Davey, haven't you? Well then, forget it!" and resuming his walk at a more rapid gait, he tried to banish

the entire thing from his mind; endeavored in the softening, chastening thoughts of his beloved Dorothy and the little innocent by her side, to find an antidote for the sickening reflections that had set his brain awhirl. And if he could ill afford the price demanded for his friend's release, the more to his credit that no regret at the expenditure occurred for an instant to him now. As he approached the house his eyes traveled toward a window near the roof. A sigh of relief escaped him. "That blessed light! I'm glad they turned it out. Here's where I undress and jump in bed with eyes closed tight. I've seen enough of nightmare envelopes for any single day"—a decision he religiously carried out.

About that time, Policeman Casey, whose beat included a portion of South State Street, called up the sergeant at the Harrison Street Station.

"Have yez got the note from thot woman, Mickle, about the lad Officer Callahan brought in? Him as didn't—Yis? Sure thot's roight. What kin yez look fer from the loikes of her, to arrist——," but the sergeant, not caring for any of Casey's moralization, and having been abundantly cursed with trouble over this self-same arrest, snapped the receiver on its hook with a smothered oath. As for Davey, he had never seen a sky so clear nor stars so bright as those now lighting him on his way.

* * * * *

But little refreshed after a restless night, Anholt, dispensing with breakfast, save coffee and rolls, reached his department in the mail-order house fully an hour before any other correspondent. Early as he was a message awaited him from Dubledіehl, stating that he would remain home for the day, preparing a statement to his cousin covering Anholt's attitude, and requesting the latter to supplement and confirm it by a letter to go, if possible, by the earliest boat.

"I've a pretty decided impression," muttered Anholt, tearing the communication to bits, "that any man confirming, sight unseen, any of that fellow's reports, deserves everything he's bound to get. Mr. Frederick G. Dubledіehl won't require any interpreter to understand what little I've got to say. The regularity with which I've been left holding the bag is getting wearisome. There'll be a different assignment of the job this time and it won't fall on the shareholders at that." Having thus given expression to his views, he cocked his feet on the adjoining chair, picked up a

writing pad, and lost himself in the labyrinth of some interesting mathematical problem. Cheered later by Davey's telephonic confirmation of his release and extravagant assurances of gratitude, and, if truth were told, infinitely relieved by Dubledichl's absence, he managed to clean up his routine work by early afternoon, a condition of affairs enabling him to dictate and mail his letter to the broker in Edinburgh before the working day was closed. As to his right to so utilize his employer's time—well, that is merely a little question of ethics, after all. Fortunately, perhaps, for his peace of mind, a letter from Marie, received with the noon's batch of mail, failed in delivery to him until the clerks were well dispersed. Tearing it open his hungry eyes devoured with incredible speed the sheets of closely written lines. With palpitating heart he read her enthusiastic report of the little one's advent; learned to his intense delight that *it* was a buster, bouncing boy; that it was the finest and most wonderfully developed youngster any person—the doctor not excepted—had ever laid eyes upon. This from a woman with a baby of her own was tribute indeed. She told him that Dorothy, although too weak to write at present, was doing splendidly, and intimated that he, as one of the luckiest beings on this planet, could only show a proper appreciation of the gift by turning a series of somersaults on the floor.

But further down the letter took on a different tone. "Not," wrote Marie, "that I want to have you worried over anything, but simply because I think this kind of knowledge helps in the end instead of hurting one." The substance of the disquieting information was that certain communications brooking no good to him were understood to be passing between parties unknown, in Chicago, and at least one of his former associates—presumably Professor Rosseau—in New York. By what devious processes the knowledge of Anholt's whereabouts had been secured, neither Marie nor the others in possession of the secret could ascertain. Nor had any enlightenment as to the precise nature of the correspondence been obtainable. Certain remarks, however, dropped from the lips of Rosseau at a meeting called for the purpose of winding up the guano company's affairs, and promptly reported by Cunningham to Storey, convinced the latter that the Professor was not only fully cognizant of

Anholt's residence and occupation, but that he proposed to utilize this information to the other's serious detriment; a fact tending to fortify Anholt's friends in their assumption that Rosseau was the author, or at least the instigator of a correspondence promising disaster to the former vice-president of the defunct corporation. Indeed, it was in the construction placed on the Professor's words that their first intimation of the surreptitious exchange of letters was found. It was determined, therefore, among his friends, to notify him of the unlooked-for development at once—Marie, as best qualified for the task, being delegated to forward the advice, in the hope that being forewarned he might guard effectually against a disagreeable surprise. It would have been inadvisable, if not indeed dangerous, considering Dorothy's condition, to allow her any knowledge of their discovery; much more so to commission her as an agent for its transmission to her husband. None of them believed the aged Withers to be involved to the slightest extent in the present plot. With Anholt's departure from the city and his total elimination from League affairs, the old man had apparently considered his object achieved, and scrupulously avoided any reference to, or comment on, his erstwhile foe.

Whether the object of this puzzling written intercourse now called to Anholt's attention had been accomplished in the notice of his dismissal yesterday, or whether that occurrence was a mere incident in the execution of some diabolic scheme directed toward his total ruination was a question impossible to answer at this time. It was quite enough to know that in his experience of the preceding day ample evidence had been adduced showing a substantial basis for his friends' expressed fears.

Another dispiriting piece of intelligence conveyed in Marie's letter related to Bob, from whom for six weeks past Anholt had received no word. The young man had—so the information ran—disposed of his cigar stand for a nominal sum, and less than a month ago had disappeared from his former haunts. For some time prior to his disappearance he had manifested symptoms of extreme nervous depression. His complexion, from a ruddy brown, gradually assumed a chalky, sickly hue; his face became pinched; his solid and agile body began to lose in flesh and vigor;

his entire appearance, startling to those who knew him, betokened despondency and failing health. He would accept no advice, offer no explanation. In a jerky, nervous way he would check the inquiries of solicitous friends by attempting to laugh their fears away. Then at times, as when Marie had last met him on the street, he would burst unaccountably into tears, express a desire for death's approach, and decry conditions which he believed had kept him down. He was not drinking—Storey had satisfied himself of that. It appeared as if some insidious disease, long nourished in his blood, had leaped suddenly into aggressive life, and attacking the vital organs with indiscriminating hands, had robbed them of the properties that make for health, and strength, and mind. It was a physical and mental transformation so marvelously rapid and pronounced, that, as Marie now wrote, without the confirmatory evidence of her friends, she would have characterized the entire experience—referring to her encounter with him—as some hideous fantasy, disclosing happenings impossible in actual life. Then, just as Storey had determined that a diagnosis must be made by some skilled physician, the man dropped mysteriously and utterly out of sight.

So far these facts had been carefully withheld from Anholt, but now the cigar stand's purchaser, harkening to persistent rumors of a certain mortgage on the stock and fixtures held by Bob's former patron, grew restless, and insisted on a signed refutation of these reports from the alleged mortgagee, else he could neither dispose of his business, if so inclined, nor secure sufficient credit to keep it fully stocked.

Anholt, with a heavy sigh and an air of intense weariness, placed the hurriedly read letter in his pocket and departed for the day. Momentarily stunned by the revelation of Bob's lamentable condition and disappearance, his thoughts gradually reverted to Storey and his unaccountable neglect in permitting a situation of this character to develop without adopting measures looking to its correction. Nor did this delinquency in failing to advise him of the treacherous disease tend to allay Anholt's feeling of resentment at what, in the solitude of his room, he chose to term "downright, criminal negligence." With his fuller realization of the unfortunate man's desperate plight, so proportionately did his feeling of anger grow.

"It's unpardonable, shameful!" so his thoughts ran as this phase of the matter kept obtruding itself on his mind. "If I'd been told about this we could have saved him. *I* know what the matter is," he continued, as he brushed his coat fiercely and caring little whether he was heard or not. "*I* know that damned so-called catarrh snuff, loaded to the gills with coke, that's started him to hell. Don't talk to me about its being a treacherous disease that's caused by anything but that hellish, seductive, mind-wrecking and soul-destroying drug—God! and its poisonous samples piled up, free for all, in spite of the law, in half of the drug stores in New York! Death—tempting adult and child alike in places supposedly consecrated to the sale of remedies that prolong one's life! I told Bob straight—he promised me he'd let the stuff alone—for good. By heaven! it looks as if some fatal curse keeps trailing at my heels, making life a misery to every one I ever learn to know and love. I wonder now," he added after a prolonged pause, "in what particular spot the cyclone will choose to strike next. Withers was right—the further men keep away from me the better off they are."

CHAPTER VI.

To the ultraconservative character of the British people has been chargeable, with no inconsiderable percentage of justice, a thwarting of numerous ambitious policies, both of state and of individuals. Precisely as with drugs, which if taken moderately effect a cure, but used to excess prolong and aggravate the malady, so has this phase of that nation's temperament, by its very immoderateness nullified and rendered impotent legislation founded on principles of actual merit and popular demand. Scanning the records of the latest Parliament, one will nod approvingly at this or that particular Act—a physical manifestation of satisfaction followed too frequently a moment later by a shrug of deep disgust. For the strength, effectiveness and worth of the aforesaid law has been entirely voided by a succeeding qualifying clause—a provision inserted for conservatism's sake, dulling the sharp edge of the enactment and rendering it ineffectual in an operation primarily intended to correct a social or a legal wrong. In the "Companies' Acts" this tendency, bravely resisted to a certain point, plays beyond that stage a prominent and consequently a disturbing part, precluding both a harmonious construction of the law and a reasonable hope on the shareholders' part of substantial redress for many transgressions of those who control the chartered companies. Fortunately our concern does not extend beyond the station at which our precedent ridden conservatist intrudes his owl-like presence into the legislative carriage. In other words, with our company once floated we will have no crows to pick with legislation affecting its perpetuation. Up to this point the laws governing the organization and control of stock companies in Great Britain are based on a clean cut, intelligent and aggressive understanding of the hour's requirements. There is no ground for misunderstanding in any of their provisions. They are clear, comprehensive, and eminently fair to principals—or promoters, and to shareholders alike. They are clean samples of honest legislative work and insure to a degree unknown in the corporation laws of the United States a frank, public avowal, not only of the company's aims and prospects, but of the exact

conditions under which it is being formed and with the promoter's profits specifically set forth. Its prospectus, as publicly advertised, is practically the charter. As a rule it conveys the only information given out; it is the only persuasive argument advanced in soliciting subscriptions to the shares. Approved by the Government and duly filed, together with the contracts it discloses, in the vaults of Somerset House, the original prospectus becomes forever available as evidence against unscrupulous promoters and would be financiers. So, too, the English principle of underwriting has advanced far beyond our crude American way, to the obvious advantage of the shareholders in British companies. With the exact amount of capital estimated as necessary to successfully begin the business stated clearly in the prospectus given out, the promoter aims to have that amount underwritten before any subscriptions are taken for the shares. Thus, whether the public subscribes to the total of the shares offered or not, those who do part with their funds are amply guaranteed that the required capital will be on hand, and that their money will not be squandered in a vain attempt to establish and conduct the business with an amount less than that stated in the prospectus as being essential. Contrasted with the customary American policy of utilizing the funds as they come in, whether the requisite sum for a successful inauguration of the business is secured or not, the merits of the English method must appeal to all cautious investors. True, this practice of first underwriting the shares is occasionally waived in Great Britain, just as in the States the safer policy outlined above is not infrequently put to the test; but even so, the safety of the subscriber's principal is assured if subscriptions fall below the required amount. In such a contingency, as in those cases where the issue has been oversubscribed, the applicant's check is returned unused. Seldom does the total number of shares underwritten equal the amount offered to the public—a wise provision from the promoter's point of view, enabling him, since the underwriting usually covers the estimated working capital alone, and a large percentage of the remaining shares offered represents his gain, to take his profits wholly or part in cash according to the public's response. It also eliminates that always deplorable experience of being obliged to return sound currency to people who have generously sent one more than was stated as being the exact sum

needed. Unlike America, where advertisements of stock issues run sometimes for weeks and months, with the proceeds from the sale of shares being largely expended on an ever-increasing publicity account, the English plan cuts this period down to an average of three days. Reciting clearly in the prospectus when the subscription lists will close, the law compels an absolute adherence to that statement. At the hour specified the issue is a failure, under which circumstances the underwriters must make up the shortage, or it has proved a success and they are released from further liability, richer by their underwriting fee. If we add to all of this the explanation that directors in the English companies almost invariably receive both an annual salary and a percentage of the profits, in addition to whatever dividends may be due them on the shares in their possession, we will have covered the ground to an extent sufficient for our purpose. Summed up, the gist of the matter amounts to this: First get your proposition; then your underwriters, and your cake is ready for the eating.

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Anson Van Anholt, having shown a due consideration for his inner man, selected with the eye of a connoisseur a particularly tempting Corona Special from the newly opened box. Frascati's had always appealed to him by reason of its lights, its music, its cuisine and Bohemian class of patronage. Without, was Oxford Street, with its scurrying crowds, its ceaseless procession of omnibuses, taxicabs and hansoms, driven by men who took the most incredible of chances, yet who always managed to get safely through; with its lights, its types, its never-ending noise; with all that men should hate yet seem to love; with its poverty, and wealth, and sin. Inside, the soft, caressing music soothed the mind; the towering, sheltering palms beckoned one to forgetfulness and peace; the atmosphere was charged with life, with merriment and song. In all a most appropriate place to wind up a prosperous and satisfying day.

Two fellow-diners, toying carelessly with cups of fragrant coffee prepared by the dark-hued attendant in Turkish dress, gazed inquiringly at Anholt. One was tall and dark, with face showing traces neither of moustache nor of beard. A long, deep scar, starting at the corner of his mouth, extended across his left cheek fully to the ear, giving his features

a singularly odd appearance and effectually preventing one from reading either his character or thoughts in the play of facial muscles. This was Mr. Frederick G. Dubledichl, of Edinburgh, the soon-to-be-reinstated broker, and successful promoter of The Schnelhauser Gear of America, Limited. The third figure at the table was a little, sandy-complexioned individual whose bushy side whiskers, composed of countless yellowish-tinted hairs growing at cross purposes one with another, appeared desirous of investigating on their own account every article of food, the result being their owner's constant application of the serviette with one hand, while he juggled his food with the other. This was Mr. Donald Mac Dougal, a most ignoble specimen physically, of a brave and honored ancestry, but who, despite his fussy ways and squeaky voice, managed fairly well to get along.

"What I said," remarked Anholt, answering their interrogatory looks, "was that—to use an American expression—you have us 'skinned a mile' when it comes to floating companies in a hurry. You're long enough figuring whether you want a thing or not, but that settled—well, it's all over."

"Quite right! quite right! you must show them first, show them first—a most delicate, difficult little trick I can assure you," and Mr. MacDougal's whiskers, having investigated the sediment in his coffee cup, now moved back and forth, leaving their undecipherable tracings on the table cloth as their owner wagged his head.

"You should remember, Mr. Anholt," observed the broker, "this flotation was an exceptionally easy one. It involved, we might say, the mere extending of what has proved a very profitable industry here, to America, and remains controlled by the same shareholders. Had this not been the case we should have experienced difficulty in obtaining any underwriting at all. Our profits here have been so large, however, and the prospects of doing business in America, as you have disclosed them, so alluring that we have had clear sailing."

"Not quite, Freddie, not quite!" and Mr. Donald MacDougal brought his little body up with a jerk. "I had many ruffles to smooth away—many, I must say! We've done creditably—all of us, and you, my dear sir"—turning to Anholt—"especially so. I consider it fortunate, quite,

that Freddie's cousin induced you to come. It was neat, very neat on his part, I call it."

"It isn't what I've done," returned Anholt, "it's what I propose doing that's worth considering now. We've got the device and we've got the demand, with some forty thousand pounds to back us up. What we need now is brains. If I haven't got enough—well, you'll know it before the money's gone. Now about that cheque"—speaking direct to Mr. Frederick Dubledіehl; "when can you fix me up?"

"Tonight. The secretary signed up this afternoon before returning to Leith. I'll arrange it at the hotel later." With these words the broker, catching Anholt's eye, gave him a peculiar look, which was rendered entirely unintelligible by reason of the strangely disfigured face.

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed the bewhiskered little financier, inspired by a—to him—most important recollection, "I must remind you, Mr. Anholt, really, to cable us your progress"—meaning by "us," the broker and himself. "Cable often—quite often, I may say. Strictly in confidence, you——"

Anholt interrupted him with a show of impatience. "I thought that proposition had been thoroughly threshed out with Mr. Dubledіehl here. It's utterly impossible. It would invalidate my contract at once. I don't propose as Managing Director to start operations by violating the confidence of my Board, and you shouldn't ask it. I don't want to appear unreasonable," he added in a less irritable tone, "but you can foresee the kind of a slump our shares would take if it accidentally developed that the executive head of the company was in cahoots with brokers and advancing them information. We'd call it a scheme to rig the stock market, over home."

"You needn't fear that, Mr. Anholt," the scar-visaged one interposed. "You understand, though, your contract is a mere matter of form—that is, you—I—it doesn't bind you to——"

Again Anholt checked an intended persuasive argument, which at the moment appeared likely to run astray. "Gentlemen, suppose we dispense with further discussion of this subject. My decision is irrevocable. I've made a number of concessions already to facilitate this

flotation, of which one or both of you have been beneficiaries, and entirely outside of our original agreement. That was a matter of policy solely. I consider this a matter of honor, and I trust you will both respect my attitude and, as we say in the States, 'forget it.' "

Later, in Anholt's room at the Metropole, and after he had receipted for the small fortune of three thousand pounds in the form of a cheque on Parr's, the subject was renewed by a remark of Dubledichl's, Mr. MacDougal having left them for the night:

"I assume, of course, that my cousin, as Resident Secretary, will be kept informed as to your orders and profits. You wouldn't object if—"

For the third time that night Anholt, as he afterwards remarked, "flew off the handle."

"Now see here, my friend, your cousin's contract contains the identical prohibition on this advance information subject as my own, and he's going to observe it, understand, as faithfully as I do, or one of us will go. You know, and I know, he's totally unfitted for his position anyhow—morally and mentally. I consider your forcing him on the company a transaction discreditable to yourself and a rank imposition on our Directors. Not because of his past escapades, which seem to be pretty generally advertised around London here, but because right now he's probably drunk, as he's been for over two weeks past, and tied up with anywhere from one to half a dozen prostitutes. You've seen enough of the cablegrams sent me to know that's straight. I'll give him one chance—just one, and that's all."

Mr. Frederick Dubledichl listened patiently to the unexpected outburst. "I thought"—his words were obviously meant to be sarcastic—"that you were under some slight obligation to my cousin as well as to myself. I understand now, the positions are reversed."

Anholt smiled indulgently. "It's gratifying to ascertain that you've corrected the misapprehension," he replied. "As a matter of fact, your cousin has never been out of my debt, financially or morally, since the day I gave him work. *Your* obligation began later, when I refused, though offered more money than you could afford to pay, to associate

myself with the original Schnelhauser crowd, and it's been increased by my silent acquiescence in this family rehabilitation game."

"I'm not disposed to recriminations, Mr. Anholt, or I might suggest the propriety of including an outsider in that last and very ungentlemanly remark. My cousin has a very unfortunate disposition, but I question the taste that makes it a matter of issue at this moment. A substantial cheque in one's possession possesses, I observe, surprising virtues as a nerve tonic," with which retort the broker calmly interested himself in an American magazine lying on the adjoining stand.

"Well," returned Anholt, "wisdom and discretion are synonymous." A minute later, with the subsidence of his temper, he mentally cursed himself as being an unfeeling and discourteous cad. Dubledіehl, versed in the frailties and vagaries of the human mind, abided his time. Finally he glanced up at the other with what was intended to be a smile illuminating his marred countenance. Anholt, following the contagious example, answered in kind.

"You're sailing tomorrow," said the broker. "What say for the last act at the Empire?"

"Conditional," agreed the American, "on a strict observance of the law, 'Thus far' and the rest, you know."

"Right you are!" and Dubledіehl, who would have passed anywhere in the States as a native of the Republic, arose in preparation for departure.

In fact, but few of the ordinary Britisher's idiosyncrasies were noticeable in his language or manner; the words just uttered being as nearly typical of his countrymen's style of speech as any that he used. He was an interesting character in many ways. Cultured and undemonstrative, with a keen eye to business and a smooth, convincing way, he possessed the faculty of influencing men to adopt his suggestions and advice, despite the presence of an intangible something cautioning them to beware. By birth a Manxman, though of German ancestry, his family later had settled in Surrey. His schooling had ended with Eton, from whose historic surroundings he had departed to matriculate as a broker's clerk in Threadneedle Street. Gaining with experience

the impression that his Trafalgar was to be found in the Provinces rather than in the Metropolitan district, he eventually became identified as junior partner with an Edinburgh brokerage house, the result being that two years later his senior having died, he was left the sole owner of a very lucrative business. As with the way of youth, this sudden elevation inspired him with an unconquerable desire to perform some startling financial stunt intended to emphasize his worthiness to fill his predecessor's boots; an ambition whose consequences were neither novel nor unexpected. In time the successive shearings received at the hands of the staid and conservative Scotch members on the floor resulted in an observable deterioration both in the quality and quantity of the wool—to such an extent, indeed, that technical grounds having been found justifying his suspension from the privileges of the Exchange, he was turned loose to browse on mankind generally, but tagged with a courteous invitation to return when the virgin fields had yielded him sufficient nourishment to grow another crop. Having erased the sign telling of his Exchange membership from his office windows, he turned instinctively as a means of livelihood to that somewhat dubious and ill-defined vocation designated as the promotion of public companies. With Mr. Donald MacDougal, whom he had known in London as a Stock Exchange member, but who, like himself, was just now creating instead of selling shares, he formed a sort of offensive and defensive alliance. Fortunately for them, their operations since that time, though small, had resulted in returning fairly satisfactory profits to their following of investors; a condition of affairs that had conduced materially to the success of this last flotation. A no less important factor, instrumental in bringing about the golden harvest, had been Anholt's marvelously comprehensive statement of the American situation as it referred to the new company's prospects, together with the plan developed by him for conducting its affairs after the business should once be under way. Nor was the young man's personality and convincing enthusiasm a negligible quantity in shaping the result. Arriving less than a month before, the first draft of the proposed prospectus embodying his report had been submitted to all probable underwriters within a week. By the expiration of another seven days their approval, accompanied by the required cheques insuring their good faith, had been received. On

Tuesday of the succeeding week the company went to the public. On Friday the subscription lists were closed with the issue oversubscribed, and the fourth week, at the end of which he was now about to sail, had been devoted to a series of Directors' meetings, called for the purpose of perfecting the business policy he had outlined. With a total subscribed capital of eighty thousand pounds, forty thousand had been set aside as a working fund and for the equipment of a plant. Thirty thousand of the balance—of which fifteen thousand represented Dubledieh!'s and Mac Dougal's profits—was paid to the inventor, Adolph Schnelhauser. Three thousand pounds went to Anholt for his time and services and to reimburse him for money spent; while the major portion of the remaining seven thousand covered the registration fee, advertising expenses, cost of printing, addressing and mailing prospectuses, solicitors' charges, the underwriters' commissions for guaranteeing half of the total issue, and brokerage costs. The Board of Directors consisted of the Honorable Albert Finley Bell, M. P., as Chairman; Anson Van Anholt, as Managing Director; and Messrs. Ernest Crowley, Rutherford Jones and Grant MacGregor —banker, solicitor and gentlemen, respectively, of Edinburgh. The remuneration of the Board's Chairman was to be two hundred pounds per annum; that of the other members, one hundred pounds each. As additional compensation a sum equal to five per cent. of the net earnings of the company, after ten per cent. in dividends had been paid the shareholders, was agreed upon. Plus the above the Managing Director was voted an annual salary of twenty-five hundred pounds; an added clause guaranteeing him—should the company's profits exceed twenty per cent. yearly—ten per cent. of all earned above that amount, after all Directors had been paid, as a premium for his work,—an inducement calculated to insure his striking an early and very rapid gait.

Messrs. Frederick G. Dubledieh! and Donald McDougal, for reasons doubtless obvious to the reader, were not considered eligible for membership on the Board. Mr. S. Landseer Dubledieh!, who according to program had been shifted by his cousin to the shoulders of the company, was left to putter around with no specially defined duties, except to draw his monthly stipend of thirty pounds, the only condition being

that he remain now and forever out of his cousin's sight. Thus was the truth and beauty of the "blood being thicker than water" adage again made manifest.

Impelled as we are to view past circumstances in the light of present events, we can discern little but a roseate hue in conditions which have terminated to our advantage. Consequently, Anholt, notwithstanding the grave suspicions and doubts originally entertained by him as to the outcome of the gear negotiations, and despite his numerous controversies with Mr. Frederick Dubledіehl, due to the latter's thinly veiled desire to use him as a tool, stepped at last aboard ship, homeward bound, with a manner reflecting the spirit of good fellowship that warmed the cockles of his heart. Why should he, the bearer of a legitimate and well-earned victory, open his mind at a time like this to the dark possibilities of ultimate defeat?

CHAPTER VII.

"George Harry, if Hope and Bishop were only here! It's like the missing link—lay your hands on it and you've nothing left to wish for," and Anholt beamed down on his guests preparatory to carving the Christmas turkey.

"And Bob, too, dear," corrected the happy little woman, gazing half reproachfully at her husband from the other end of the table. "Poor, dear Bob!" she added reflectively. "I wonder where he——"

"Yes, dearest," interrupted the standing man hastily, "we all do, but the dead past doesn't parade today," a reprimand which he instantly regretted, and which brought the blush of confusion to Dorothy's hitherto cheer-inspiring face.

"Our friend Anholt," remarked the Reverend Melville Storey, with surprising promptitude, "holds first lien on that 'dead past' quotation. He's arranged it with variations to suit all occasions and was never known to spring the right one. The last time I heard it was immediately after Mr. Hope had asked his wife what delayed her mother at dinner." In the laughter following this bit of raillery—spontaneous tribute to the minister's tact—Dorothy found a gratifying relief.

"That explains," she made bold to say, as Anholt with a shrug again turned his attention to the fowl, "why Van insists on having the words 'He meant well' inscribed on his tombstone." Then, woman like, having retaliated, she glanced appealingly at the man she loved for some signal of forgiveness.

Ignoring both the sly thrust, provocative of increased merriment, and the subsequent beseeching look, the twice-struck target stared at the still undissected *piéce de resistance* with a half puzzled, half irritated air. Finally, with a grim and determined look, he laid down the carving outfit and addressed the hostess:

"Was this animal marked for us?"

Struck by the oddity of the question, she hesitated, then replied wonderingly, "Why, yes, Van! what is wrong with it?"

"Everything's wrong." He picked the knife up again and jabbed the offending bird. "It should have gone down to State street, to the anatomical museum. This phenomenal 'critter,'" he added, prodding it again, "hasn't got anything that looks like a joint in its whole blessed body."

When the half dozen guests had partially regained their composure, Storey again proved himself an angel of relief.

"You're simply a victim, my friend, of a characteristic American fault. As a people we lack the proper reverence for many of the most charming tradition-born customs, of which to me, not the least delightful is the carving of the Christmas turkey."

With a look of relief Anholt tendered him the carver.

"Speaking in a fatherly way," observed the minister a moment later, as his skilful disarticulation of the joints evidenced his knowledge and practice, "I would suggest that by experimenting with, say, about one turkey a week for the next six months, you might——"

"I think," exclaimed Anholt, speaking as a man would who had just woke up, "I'll have a leg."

"Which," returned Storey, "since you've fingered it so thoroughly, you'll get."

An hour before, Dorothy, with her arms around her husband's neck, and with face suffused with the imprints of his many kisses, felt her cup of happiness filled to the overrunning stage.

"It's our golden Christmas, dearest," she murmured as her lustrous eyes searched into the depths of his.

"It's a gift of God, darling," he replied, softly stroking the dark hair from her forehead. "It is His recognition of your pure, self-sacrificing womanhood—this day and—that." Her eyes followed his toward the floor. Hers were luminous with the divine tenderness of motherhood; his sparkled with the light of proud possession. Both pairs rested on the choicest jewel of their owners' lives—a chubby, cooing little babe, to whom just now the whole world was a paradise, with the trinkets in his hands the richest treasures of the realm.

It was a picture which in the dreams and imagination of transcendent genius might be for an instant reproduced, but the beauty of which no skill, no experience or technique could transfer to the painted cloth, and by perpetuating it immortalize the worker of the wondrous achievement.

To this man, apparently, and to his wife, undoubtedly, the serenity and joy promised nineteen centuries ago to doers of the Master's will, had now, on the anniversary of His natal day, assumed dominion in their hearts. Downstairs, their friends, proved by the test of adversity and time, placed the final touch upon this masterpiece created in the atmosphere of honest purposes and love.

There was Marie, beneath whose loyal, brilliant womanhood was blanketed the ashes of her childhood's hopes. There was Storey, rare combination of the practical and ideal; far-seeing, diplomatic and sincere; whose *bon homié*, defiant of all natural laws, attacked the clouds of blank despair, forcing the silvery lining before and not behind their sombre face. There was Anholt's mother, whose eyes and countenance reflected her unalterable faith in the ultimate triumph of a consistent Christian life; whose prayers, eloquent in their simplicity, were incessant pleadings for Divine guidance of an ofttimes faltering son. There was his sister, of delicate health and sensitive mind, whose moods, changeable as her brother's fortunes, were gay or saddened as he experienced smiles or frowns—a noble, generous-hearted girl; in spite of her physical weakness, self-reliant and independent of another's aid; self-supporting, if need be, and possessor of no meagre place in Anholt's heart and thoughts. There was David Eastman, born in the whirlwind of human passions and saved from the débris in its wake to become a butt and target for self-absolved society. And lastly there was Manheim Burgess, whose god was Art; whose antonym was consistency; whose life was one perpetual, radiant dream, with fancy ranging from his ascendency in the impressionistic school, to the creatorship of a universally accepted constitution for the rule of humankind, which latter phase of his eccentric mind will prove explanatory of his presence here.

Marie, profiting by Mr. Carter's tender of a full week's vacation, had, after giving the most explicit instructions as to her baby's care and insuring its contentment by a wonderful collection of Christmas duds and toys, taken the shortest route to the second city in the land, while Storey, for reasons which were entirely satisfactory to himself, decided that Anholt particularly needed his advice and services at this especial time; all of which conduced to bring about a reunion under conditions peculiarly gratifying to each participant.

Let us revert now to the scene of expectant faces and watering mouths. Somebody had made reference to an unexpected inheritance, of which Storey, under conditions rather unusual, was to be the recipient.

"When does the unworthy legatee touch the rustling notes?" The succulent piece of meat was poised midway between the plate and Anholt's mouth.

The minister, having a proper regard for his physical well being, continued the steady operation of his maxillaries until the twenty-seventh count was reached. "Three years from this day week, my friend, which is the selfsame date on which certain gentlemen well known to both of us will brand themselves insane."

"No three years by a long shot, if the gear business keeps up," retorted Anholt. "Another year of Schnelhauser prosperity and we'll buy the Philippines for a demonstration ground. That million of yours won't be a circumstance."

"I just think that's grand, the way Mr. Anholt is succeeding with his company. Don't you, Mr. Storey?" and Marie, whose pleasure was proclaimed in eyes as well as words, glanced at the big-hearted wearer of the cloth.

"I'm not surprised," replied the fortunate individual addressed. "Our friend always seemed to be at home wherever wheels were spinning round. Not," he added hastily, "that I incline to the figurative——."

Anholt, checking him with the suggestion that he rake his mind for a joke less threadbare, was in turn interrupted by Dorothy's observing that "Probably Mr. Storey would need his fortune anyhow."

"By the time he gets it," she added, "you'll all be in such a muddle that you'll need the money to pay your fines and settle with the misguided victims;" to which her husband with a smile robbing the words of any sting, replied, expressing the belief that were it a matter solely of finding traitors in the camp they "needn't necessarily go to the Philippines to find them."

"Speaking of gifts," remarked Marie, lowering her *demi-tasse,* "I do think Dorothy received the sweetest one."

"As a matter of fact," said Storey, "I've been more or less hypnotized by its sparkle ever since Anholt began chopping the turkey. Another cup? Yes—thanks! Not, you will observe, that my digestive machinery is affected by that peculiar state of mind."

Dorothy, dropping the offending hand to her lap, looked up with a conscious, guilty blush enhancing the beauty of her countenance. Marie, with a reproving gesture turned to the gourmet at her side.

"Why will you not be serious!" she exclaimed. "It wasn't the ring I meant at all. It was the most beautiful greeting from little Stanley she found this morning in her——er——under the mantel, I mean."

Storey, irresistibly impelled to laugh, dropped his cup with a crash that for the moment relieved Marie of the amused glances leveled at her crimson face.

"I wrote Anholt a month ago," he finally managed to say, "that his precocious heir would be tackling Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy by the first of the year. Did he typewrite it?" he queried, an aggravatingly innocent look taking possession of his face.

Marie whose features wore a pretty pout, was saved the necessity of a reply by the intervention of the raven-haired Burgess:

"I read it," he exclaimed. "It's an artistic triumph—a literary gem. It's a sermon, my dear sir, which I must urge on you to read. Ah, the sentiment, the sentiment!" and he shook his head slowly, as one might do in expressing regret at some great and irreparable loss.

"Another custom," remarked Storey, addressing nobody in particular, "revered by many of our ancestors was the closing of such happy functions as the present one with a few words appropriate to the day. I'm

going to invite myself to perform this somewhat difficult task—considering my rather inflated condition, for the sole purpose of gazing on that precious document. 'Out of the mouth of babes,' you know, much wisdom has crept into this world. Will somebody kindly pass the sermon?"

"You people," growled Anholt, "can spring more tomfoolery than Marseleen could ever conjure up."

"Now dear!"—there was the slightest touch of rebuke in Dorothy's voice—"I think Mr. Storey ought to see it. I'm going to get it for him, anyhow."

Her husband gave a gesture of resignation. "I hope for the love of peace, he remembers it's the sermon, not the text," and he settled back, wondering gloomily about the quality of certain waiting Perfectos.

"This," observed the minister a minute later, as his eyes traveled rapidly over the paper in his hand, "*is* a sermon. The little chap we all have learned to love so well sends it as a Christmas greeting to our friends. I am going to read it to you all, and as I do so let each select some thought to carry in the heart; some helpful lesson from this message of a little child. Let me read:"

"'For mama and papa: This is my first Christmas. I wonder if throughout my life the peace and sunshine of this day will come and come again with each recurring year. Today I could but give a smile to those I love. 'Twas all I had to give, but it spread content and happiness within their hearts. The skies seemed all the bluer; the day a golden milestone on life's way—a Christmas that from year to year, so long as recollection lives, will remain to them a tender, priceless memory. Only six short months of my uncertain journey passed; only a glimpse of this curious, wonderful world, with here and there a transient, infant joy—a few forforgotten pains, smothered in the caress and magic of a mother's love. Only a strange, confusing fantasy of lights and shadows; of cries and laughter; of funny looking frowns, and fleeting, captivating smiles. Nothing of envy; nothing of malice; nothing within the mystic warp and woof of my short life but innocence and pure, God-given love. Yet little as I am my smiles today are never lost. They light the way to Christ of those I love. They bring pleasure, happiness and peace. My little infant

chuckles thrill the heart's responsive chords with rapturous delight. The soul beneath their influence expands to nobler things and radiates good will and charity and hope to fellow men. Who will say that I am but a helpless, powerless thing? Who will claim that I can do no wondrous deeds? Who will contend the pathway to the Christly presense is not the brighter for those kindly acts, those gentle words, which later help to sweeten memory like blossoming and fragrant flowers, and whose origin was found in the influence of my tiny self? Who will dispute the never-ending power for good that springs to being in my gleeful shout? May this one ennobling truth be ever cherished as I sail on life's uncharted sea! May the recollection of this day, by some great miracle abide with me until the twilight merges into never-ending night! In its remembrance may I feel self-sacrifice a joy; in its lesson find a safe and ever-gleaming guide-post on my road! My comical, infant ways and cooing notes are Heaven born. My thoughts keep wandering back to Paradise from whence I came. My sparkling eyes are like the glistening dewdrops of the clear, Celestial dawn. They inspire the ones I love to purer thoughts; to resolutions framed for human good; to gentleness; to mercy; to forgiveness of the erring ones. I wield an influence imperishable as time. My sceptre is innocence; my badge of sovereignty is love; my realm, the hearts and souls of men. No mortal hands have left their imprints on my laws. They have survived the test of time. They will remain unaltered until the last resplendent day. Until then we'll never know the measure of their worth. And so throughout my life—whatever else to give I lack, may my smiles forever shine! May they ever bear as on this day, tidings of joy, of peace and hope; inspiring men to generous and uplifting deeds! May I learn to spread them out broadcast! May my heart at all times feel the love and charity my face proclaims! May my eyes be truthful; my friendships long; my helping hand be guided by no selfish aim or thought! May I, on each succeeding Christmas, learn some sublime, some precious truth! May the sense of obligation to my fellowmen increase as years pass by! May I ever walk uprightly, in close communion—not in fear of Him who gave me breath! May I with faithfulness and pride perform the honest

duties of each hour, as God shall give me mind to see and hands to do!' "

Storey, who had been standing, laid the paper down and crossed his hands.

"These beautiful words," he said softly, "found their inspiration in a much beloved babe. The hand that penned them was the father's, but behind it all stands out in bold outline, the one triumphant, powerful and resistless sentiment we recognize as love, and love, my friends, is God. To Him, therefore, may we not for just one minute turn, praying His Divine assistance in following the path so exquisitely shown?"

By Marie, this opportunity to hide her gathering tears, was welcomed as a blessed relief. Dorothy, who had been watching her with eyes suspiciously moist, for the first time realized the torture she had unwittingly imposed upon her friend. With the rising lump within her throat came a full appreciation of the other's unutterable and hopeless misery. Longing to throw her arms around the suffering woman and kiss away the evidence of her pain, she was checked by fear of the interpretation such an action might receive. With mingled feelings of self-condemnation and pity for the unrelievable loneliness of the other's lot, she could only remain silent, and hope that somewhere in the prayer now being offered, her friend would find a comforting and helping thought.

Five minutes later, the ladies, accompanied by David Eastman, who, in Anholt's mother had found a sympathetic listener to his views, left the gentlemen to their cigars. "An exodus," the host had remarked, "which differed chiefly from that of the Israelites, in that Moses now tarried behind to dabble with the flesh pots;" to which insinuation the minister had made retort that "at least one commendable virtue of the ancients appeared to be extinct," and recalled that "out of respect for the departing female contingent, even the Red Sea had for a time dried up." Then, having satisfied himself that no chair sufficiently large and comfortable decorated the dining room, he started on a reconnaissance of the adjoining rooms. Anholt, long since initiated into this phase of the minister's makeup, turned indifferently to Burgess.

"Any more counterfeits in the galleries?" he inquired.

The artist, having declined an invitation to test the quality of the dark Havanas, completed his skillful rolling of a cigarette.

"Not recently," he replied after a time; "but the dreadful possibility remains. Disheartening—awfully, to genius, you know!" and he stared with a melancholy countenance at the wall.

"What," asked his host, "is the matter with your long-haired fraternity adopting the finger-print wrinkle? It looks to me as if——."

"An inspiration, my good fellow!" exclaimed Burgess, saved from his impending trance. "What originality you possess! Ah, what an idea! You must accept my thanks, my dear Mr. Anholt—you must really."

For the time being, further conversation was prevented by the entrance of Storey, pushing a massive chair of the Morris type. Having more or less successfully engineered it through the doorway, leaving a trail of scratches sufficiently visible to indicate his course, he brought it up with a turn, directly facing the fire, selected his cigar, settled himself comfortably, and was lost a minute later to the world.

Anholt again broke the silence. "Burgess," he said, "do you know I have often wondered whether it is lack of originality or lack of courage that restrains you—I refer to artists in general—from reproducing on canvas and in stone the human figure in its most lovable and exalted form? You play with nudity in man, woman and child; but in the woman's case you confine yourself to the one least attractive type. You've taken square and rule, and figured out what you term the exact proportions and perfect contour of the female form, and you build your masterpieces all on this one unvarying rule—maiden thus and matron so and so. Whether you place her at Belshazzar's feast, on Cleopatra's float, in Paradise or Hell, the rule is worked the same. But neither brush nor chisel, so far as I have seen, has reproduced her in the form that Heaven loves—in her state of a prospective motherhood; in the tenderest, most beautiful period of her life, Where every hour is rich in thrills of mixed anxiety and hope; where a soul is being made for all eternity; where two lives now, instead of one, will tremble in the balance until the eventful day; where man and wife are closer drawn than they ever were before; where soothing words and carefully guarded lips, succeed to half indifference and complaints; where

Christ draws nearer and earth seems fairer than at any other time. Burgess—man! you and your profession have slept through all the ages. You revel in accomplished motherhood—when the doubts, and fears, and anxious hours are past. You're safe then, though the child is but five minutes old. You insult the rules of decency by reproductions of bacchanalian orgies with nudity rampant, but your sensitive, artistic soul revolts at picturing the most sublime experience known to human life. When all else fails, we look to art as a preserver of the truth. Instead of that she clings to the ideal as figured out on geometric lines, and shrugs her shoulders at the honest thing."

Anholt, pausing, looked curiously at Burgess. The latter, whose countenance by this time mirrored the dazed condition of his mind, tried ineffectually to frame, on behalf of himself and the fraternity in general, a coherent reply to this startling and unexpected expression of his host's opinions. Storey, accustomed by experience to hearing what he termed "Anholt's venting of surplus steam, regardless of whether the circumstances particularly called for it or not," puffed serenely away, entirely too comfortable to bother himself trying to follow the devious bypaths of this latest harangue.

"But, my dear fellow!"—the machinery of the artist's mind was again in running order. "Even art must draw a line somewhere. I should be a sacrilegist, really, to put brush to such a theme as you suggest. Ah! you do it cleverly, though. You must——."

"Oh, bosh!" retorted Anholt. "Don't talk to me about its being too sacred a topic for the brush. If it is, throw out your Madonnas, Christs, and all your works that breathe of Heaven, God, and love. You want to be original. Get busy—go out and look around until you see a woman, loose attired, walking slowly, cautiously along the street. Note the man supporting her—the man who never had the time to walk with her before. Observe his tender look; the strangely happy light within her eyes. Attend to the solicitude in his voice and her grateful, low toned reply. Watch for the countless evidences of their reunited hearts. You'll see all this and more. Then hunt your studio and go to work. Not some mere suggestion, man, as ventured now and then by the most courageous of your crowd;

but tell the truth—the whole beautiful, God-given, heaven-blessed, enduring truth. Originate a new school—specialize; that's your cue!"

Having thus simultaneously eased his mind and shot his bolt at Burgess, Anholt directed his attention to another smoke; a pleasure which, like the artist's proposed defense, was indefinitely postponed in obedience to Dorothy's command calling them to herself and friends.

As the artist, still wondering at his host's voluntary dissertation on a subject so universally tabooed, started for the library, where a monster Christmas tree, more appropriate for a juvenile asylum than for a baby six months old, had been rigged up by the enthusiastic father, the latter turned to Storey and remarked:

"I hated to, but I've simply got to jar him loose;" referring thereby to his perpetual bombardment by Burgess with ideas and suggestions which the man of art insisted should be incorporated in his friend's plan for the cure of social ills; a plan with which the artist had become conversant through a letter sent him by his old classmate, Powers, of New York City.

"My only safety," Anholt had explained to Storey, "is to be found in making him think I'm crazier than he is himself;" in accordance with which policy he had played his hand today.

"My friend," replied the minister, to the other's expression of regret at the course he was pursuing, "there was just one man in the room who believed exactly what you said, and it was neither Mr. Burgess nor myself."

CHAPTER VIII.

The consistent and rapid expansion of business, which, under Anholt's management had raised the hopes of shareholders in The Schnelhauser Gear of America, Limited, and incidently the value of their shares, was due in no small measure to the Managing Director's disregard for conventionalism and his propensity for achieving through some startling, brilliant maneuver, results which ordinarily, to insure their permanence, should be based upon a calm, impartial consideration by the customer of arguments advanced in behalf of the seller's goods. Whatever doubts as to the wisdom of Anholt's policy may have at first entered the minds of his associates on the Board, they were, in the light of increasing orders and heavy bank balances, rapidly dispersed. Having been given *carte blanche* in his operations and being hampered by no restraining arm from across the sea, he had inaugurated a campaign of publicity which kept the advertising agency as busy disavowing its authorship, as it did the critical Dubledichl in writing out cheques—which cheques, by the way, Anholt and his General Manager were both required to sign. Lecturers, amply compensated, addressed technical institutes, labor organizations and mechanics wherever found, on what they styled the "most potent agency for economy and efficiency ever introduced to the machinery world." Master mechanics, superintendents of plants, engineers, editors of trade journals and buyers for progressive manufacturing concerns were, paradoxical as it may seem, converted if not convinced, and helped swell the acclamatory wave which threatened to submerge half the machinery owners in the country under insistent demands of employees for the installation of the new invention. And, if to convert means to pay, who so finical as to accuse Anholt of violating the ethics of modern commercialism? Who indeed, unless it be Dubledichl, with his ineradicable tendency to bewail the success of anyone or anything, and in whose voluminous reports to "Cousin Fred," the "bloomin' stir" that Anholt's "rot" had made, was invariably deplored? Who likewise contended that such conditions could never last, and prophesied a grand explosion, with a

resultant cloud of smoke casting its shadow all the way to Scotland;—another case of wish begetting thought and the cause of some astonishing gyrations in the Provincial Exchanges by this particular company's shares; a performance terminating, on a statement being made by the Directors, of the actual profits and results, in a higher quotation than before. As a matter of fact, the Schnelhauser gear possessed such manifest and decided merits as to insure the company a long and profitable life, provided a safe and efficient management controlled its destinies. Had the value of the invention been less obvious; had it not been proved a practical and economical device; had the trade conditions been unfavorable, or the trade itself antagonistic to the new improvement, Dubledіehl's predictions might to some extent have appeared justified, and his criticism of Anholt's policy, honestly conceived. Had a probability existed that dealers, once loaded up with the company's goods, would find them a white elephant on their hands, thus eliminating any prospect of a heavy future demand, the advertising tactics adopted might rightfully have been characterized as bordering on sharp practice, and the expenditures involved as an indirect filching of the corporation's funds. None of these conditions existed however, and the Managing Director, imbued with the idea that quick sales meant early profits, refused to recognize a conservatism satisfied to accomplish in a year what he believed aggressiveness could effect within the month. In the quality of the article, he contended, would be found a sufficient defense for his somewhat spectacular course; a contention which, in view of the constantly growing business, his fellow Directors most heartily endorsed.

Not that Messrs. Frederick Dubledіehl and Donald MacDougal, in Scotland, and Mr. S. Landseer Dubledіehl, in America, failed to use due diligence in their efforts to discredit Anholt's work; but because the Directors, loyal to that legal axiom which presumes every man innocent until proved otherwise, and having the history of the Dubledіehls before them, spent little time in determining on which side of the fence to look for trickery and fraud. Thus we see the widening gulf between the Dubledіehls and MacDougal on one side, and the honest Directors—who, to insure the company's successful flotation the promoters had induced

to serve—on the other. In truth, these self-same promoters were just now treading a prickly and uncertain path. Deceived first in their belief that Anholt would prove to be a willing tool, and thereby—when too late for representation on the Board,—forced to rely upon S. Landseer Dublediehl as their only source of news, they were made to pay the piper in a double sense. Sacrificing their own holdings because of the gloomy outlook as described by their correspondent, and influencing their intimates to follow suit, they found themselves on the publication of the company's real condition, described as little short of thieves. Charged with the wilful circulation of misstatements derogatory to the corporation they had formed, they were restrained on their own, as well as on their informer's account, from disclosing the channel through which their information came—information which, had it been correct, would have earned them thanks instead of suits at law. Nor were they able to extract any consolation from the gradually accumulating mass of suspicions, inferences, and authenticated reports reflecting on Anholt's past, industriously gathered by the third member of this threatened and disgruntled triumvirate. Even if the nearing probe should touch the carefully guarded vital spot, it would but increase rather than mitigate the peril of their position. In vouching for Anholt's character and reputation at a time when such endorsement was necessary to their purpose, they had compromised themselves irrevocably. As yet, however much they may have criticised his business methods, they had sedulously refrained from attacking his integrity. Their sole hope now, both for reinstatement in the confidence of their former followers and for the privilege of becoming jubilant participants in the melon slicing ceremony, lay in the possibility of their bringing about the present Managing Director's retirement, either by resignation or removal, and in securing the appointment of a more pliant individual as his successor. But to accomplish this result without sinking deeper in the mire themselves—*that* would require a master hand at jugglery, indeed. All of which constituted a not altogether unsuspected situation, so far as the subject of their enmity was concerned.

To briefly summarize: The business was an assured success; the Directors were satisfied; Messrs. Frederick Dubledіehl and Donald Mac Dougal were discredited; Anholt must therefore be deposed; and Mr. S. Landseer Dubledіehl, stool pigeon, player of both ends against the middle, reputation assassin and provider of damp ammunition to his co-conspirators, was busy covering up his tracks from his Managing Director's eyes.

That this same Dubledіehl retained his position on sufferance alone, was thoroughly understood by him. He knew that Anholt was acquainted with many of his moral delinquencies, but whether to the mere extent of his frequent carousals, against which no provision had been made in his contract, or to his more serious breaches of the moral—if not, in fact of the criminal code, he had been unable to ascertain.

To Anholt, knowing the fellow to be a debaucheé, believing him to be the originator of reports inimical to the company's well being, and shrewdly suspecting him of profiting in several ways at the corporation's expense, the situation presented a grave and increasingly distressing aspect. How much did the Englishman know? On the reply to that alone, could he safely base decided action. That Dubledіehl, once dismissed, would spread his information broadcast, with such elaborations as would tend to whet the appetite of sensationalists and insure the downfall of the man who had succored him in time of need, was unquestionable. But did this knowledge extend to the one hideous, awful truth? There lay the crux of the whole complicated affair. If proof existed of actual criminality on Dubledіehl's part, and if Anholt secured possession of such proof, would the latter's position be any more secure? Or was he not indeed, as matters stood, at the mercy of the other's whims? A singular state of circumstances truly, that made the Dubledіehls, Mac Dougal and himself, both slaves and masters in the same strange mess.

Within the month immediately preceding the Christmas holidays, two incidents occurred, helping rather to augment than to simplify the questions thus involved. One was the pressing by a leading machinery house, of a demand on Dubledіehl for the repayment of some three hundred dollars paid him by its manager as a commission, or rebate, on the sale of certain lathes to the Schnelhauser company, which lathes proving unsat-

isfactory, were subsequently returned in accordance with the contract and the invoice price refunded. The machinery manufacturers claimed that the Englishman, who had first advised them of his company's requirement for this line of goods, had promised to guarantee them against any loss resulting from their return. On the other hand, the aggrieved defendant denied any knowledge whatsoever of the transaction, protested vigorously against the defamatory charge, and dramatically defied them to produce any written evidence, signed by him, tending to involve him in so dishonorable a deal—a challenge obviously failing of acceptance. So far as the gear company was concerned it could lose nothing; a fact which Dubledieh had taken pains to emphasize when called by Anholt to account. To the latter's warning that any more developments of the kind would result in a change in the Resident Secretary's office, the Englishman had promptly retorted that he would be "jolly glad to break away from his Botany Bay type of associates, anyhow;" a reply rather welcomed than otherwise by his superior, promising as it did an entire and voluntary removal of the mask of hypocrisy which the fellow had been wearing heretofore. No other phase of Dubledieh's treacherous disposition was so entirely abominable in his Managing Director's opinion, as that which induced his invariable carrying of an assumed friendly air in the presence of those whom he proposed knifing at the first turning of their backs. To all men smirks and bows in front—sneers and stabs behind; such was S. Landseer Dubledieh—moral monstrosity, human thing; devoid apparently of a sole redeeming trait.

The second incident, which in chronological order, by the way, came first, and which materially aided in impressing the Englishman's retort on Anholt's mind, consisted in the very commonplace fact of a letter having been received by his calumniator—an ordinary occurrence in itself, but which, to the Managing Director, glancing over the morning's batch of mail, assumed a tragic coloring in view of the chirography forming the address; a style of writing proclaiming the authorship of the enclosed communication as clearly as if the signature itself was visible; as surely as if Mr. Samuel Withers' corner card stared him defiantly in the face.

No small proportion of the conversation which had kept Storey and his friend engaged in the former's room until the early hours of the morning succeeding Christmas day, revolved around the conditions we have just described. If there was some division of sentiment as to what Anholt's future attitude should be, they fully agreed on one important point; namely, that an open rupture with the Dubledіehls should, if possible, be deferred until the end of the company's fiscal year.

This conclusion reached, Anholt glancing at the clock, uttered an exclamation of surprise, tossed the unsmoked portion of his cigar in the grate, and prepared to bid the minister good night. Storey, raising his hand, motioned for the other to resume his seat.

"There's just one question more, friend, and it has to do with me. I'll state the case and then I want your answer; just 'yes' or 'no'—nothing more." The big fellow, with crossed hands, continued for a moment gazing at the dying coals. Anholt, in dread, awaited what he believed would be the inquisition against which for two days past he had endeavored to steel himself.

"My friend," began Storey with an appearance of calmness belying the forebodings in his heart, "I love a woman. You know that. You know her name. I believe she cares for me. I'm not worthy of her. I never was—never hope to be. I could make her happy—*that* I know, if somehow, sometime, I should be blessed with such a right. But, my friend, there's a barrier she claims to be impassable, standing between us. I don't—unless in your good judgment I can tear it down—want to know its nature. But I do want your answer, one way or the other, on this point. Would she be happier in claiming me merely as her friend than as —her husband; than to rest within my arms and be sheltered by my love? You know her, Anholt; answer, 'yes' or 'no.'

When his friend stopped, Anholt, hesitating and yet compelled to speak, struggled to devise a reply, which while honest, would still inspire the minister with hope. The latter's tact had made this less difficult than he had feared, but to give it in a single word was neither possible nor fair to either Storey or Marie.

"Old chap," he said finally, "I can't reply with a simple 'yes' or 'no;' but I'll make it short enough. If I were in your place, I'd never rest until she gave herself to me. I'd wage a merry battle. I'd persevere. I'd go through Hell to get her; and Storey"—his face grew very low—"if I found her there I'd pledge my own soul, if need should be, to pay for her release. To me, the noblest, purest, truest women of this or any other time, are my mother, my sister and my wife. Then, on the pedestal just below them, stands Marie. I say this from the bottom of my heart, regardless of her past, her present, or of anything to come. And you, dear fellow!" —he was now standing, with his hand resting on the shoulder of his friend,—"you, by virtue of your ownership of every manly trait; by reason of your godliness; your charity; your self-sacrificing work and love, possess a valid claim upon the consideration of this jewel of womanhood. I don't believe your title will be recognized without a long and patient fight. But you've got my help—and Dorothy's. Keep up your nerve! Go in and win! That's my answer, old chap—and now—good night!"—

No words. A warm and lingering pressure of the hands. That was all.

CHAPTER IX..

Following the return of Storey and Marie to New York at the close of the Christmas holidays, Anholt again turned his attention to furthering his company's interests, determined to solidify and strengthen them to an extent precluding more than a temporary slump in the value of Gear shares should a realization of his worst fears occur. Successfully disguising his apprehension of impending trouble from Dorothy behind the enthusiasm with which he elaborated upon the company's business and prospects, he sought in the atmosphere of his home a surcease of anxiety and dread; a search prolific more frequently of rising lumps and smothered sighs than unalloyed happiness and peace. The penitential's spirit in fact, was being sorely tried—the theory placing Purgatory upon this earth, becoming more and more a demonstrated truth. With the passing of weeks however, and in the absence of new developments indicating more than the customary activity on Dubledieh1's part looking to his superior's discomfiture, Anholt found some encouragement for his hope of rounding out at least a full year's service with the company. From the gradual and gratifying cessation of threatening communications from the East, he extracted no small amount of relief; a sensation intensified by his knowledge of an unmistakable change of sentiment in his favor, among his old associates, and which was referred to in every letter from his friends.

In early February, Bishop and Storey, on a mission unexplained in their brief notices of departure, sailed unexpectedly for the south of France. From Marie, who covered the event in a letter suspiciously long and detailed, a hint touching on their motive was received, inasmuch as she stated that if the trip, which "had to do with Mr. Bishop's future, was successful, it would tickle Mr. Anholt half to death;" a statement which together with Storey's enigmatical postscript to his very unsatisfactory letter, in which he said that on their return "Bishop would prob-

ably open up," gave the puzzled man abundant food for conjecture, however little it may have helped him to the truth.

A week subsequent to the sailing of his friends, Anholt received a telegram which temporarily relegated all thoughts of his own troubles to the companionship of minor considerations. Forwarded as a night message by Marie, it had been delivered at the company's office before his arrival there in the morning—a fearsome bomb concealed within a cover small and innocent to the view. It read, following the address:

"Bob arrested charged with killing Essingham. Letter and newspapers following. What shall I do in absence Storey, Bishop. Hope also away. Answer.

MARIE."

The reply, "Get lawyer, my expense. Awaiting details," was on the wires in a time so incredibly short as to induce its sender, studying his watch in his office later, to wonder whether it actually had been sent, or if his brain, stunned by the unexpected blow, was not playing him some scurvy trick. Leaving instructions that on no account should he for the present be disturbed, he locked the door to his private room and neglecting to remove either overcoat or hat, settled himself in a chair to think.

"There isn't a blessed thing I can do," was the conclusion he reached, "until I get that letter. I wonder—Great Heavens! if they should ring me in on this as they did when Happy-go-lucky Joe was caught; that would be the last crook in the letter "s" of finis. It isn't—it can't be possible, and yet—"

He sat like a man transfixed; his lips dry, and the perspiration standing in beads on his pallid brow. On looking at him one might have thought that the man, struck suddenly by the sombre hand, had passed to the Great Beyond. Then came that characteristic toss of the head, signifying his transition from a state of utter dejection to one of resignation; not the entirely passive kind, but the one which, if the worst promises to appear, determines to receive it gracefully, yet fights manfully and to the last to lessen the impact of the blow. To the motto of Monte Cristo, "Wait and hope," he had learned to add the third essential word—work.

If the ensuing twenty-four hours were among the most anxious ones of his life; if the hopes and fears alternately ruling his thoughts deprived

him both of appetite and sleep; if he began once more to question the justice of a Divine Tribunal, neither by word nor action was it manifested at his office or his home. And when at last the information came, relieving him of suspense on his own account, the facts, to all appearances pointing to his former protegé's guilt, left him but little easier than before. Stripped of inconsequential verbiage the newspaper reports, more intelligible than the letter of Marie, simmered down to this:

"At three o'clock this morning, while attempting to arrest Robert Mac Namara, whom he had discovered in the act of robbing the drug store of Louis Bechtel at No. ——— Columbus Avenue, Detective Joseph Essingham, formerly of the Central Office, and more recently connected with Lowenthal's Private Inquiry Bureau, was shot by the fleeing burglar and died an hour later in Roosevelt Hospital. MacNamara, who is now behind the bars, charged with the crime, is a cocaine fiend and a character well known to the police. Essingham, when found by Patrolman Davis of the West 110th Street Station ten minutes after the shooting, was lying unconscious under the scaffolding erected in front of the new Randolph Apartment building at Columbus Avenue and ——— Street. Davis, after summoning the ambulance and examining the dying man more carefully, recognized in him an old fellow officer, with whom he had served in the Oak Street Precinct. On arrival at the hospital the surgeon in charge of the emergency ward pronounced the case hopeless. On the detective's forehead was a jagged gash, evidently the result of a rough stone thrown at short range. Directly behind the left ear was a wound made by a 38 calibre bullet and the immediate cause of his death. Ten minutes before he expired, Essingham recovered consciousness long enough to make a short ante-mortem statement. In it he charged Mac Namara, whom he had intercepted in the act of escaping through the side entrance to the drug store, with the shooting. There had been a scuffle and before the officer could iron his man the latter managed to break away, and making for the corner started up the Avenue. Looking back he saw Essingham gaining on him and picking up a rock, threw it at his pursuer, striking him in the face. The shot was fired later, as the detective lay unconscious on the ground. Essingham had not observed Mac Namara drawing his gun. He had arrested the man before and was positive in his identification.

An examination of the dying man's clothes showed that he had been robbed after the shooting, even to his shield. MacNamara was arrested at six o'clock this morning at No. —— West Fifty-fourth Street. He

acknowledged having entered the drug store, and having thrown the rock at Essingham in an effort to escape, but denied any knowledge of the subsequent shooting. He admitted having been arrested by the officer several times before, but insisted that no bad blood existed between them. Nothing in the way of a weapon or of the articles stolen from Essingham was found on him. Several dollars worth of cocaine found in his pockets was later identified by the druggist as the same taken from his store. The pharmacist had missed nothing more."

To the reports covering the details of the crime, was appended, in the case of each paper, a crisp sermon on the evils of the cocaine habit, pregnant with the truth, and convincing by reason of the terrible example utilized as a text.

"But they don't," muttered Anholt, as with sickened heart he laid the papers to one side; "they don't go at it right. They talk 'cocaine' and not one man in fifty cares a continental. Let them call it by another equally appropriate name—catarrh snuff—catarrh powders, and watch the population sit up and begin to think; see how near home the shot will strike. But Bob, boy," he continued, still muttering to himself, "this isn't helping you and I'm going to prove your innocence or bust. It's going to be hard though, to work it from this end instead of being on the ground." He pressed a button on his desk and a moment later his stenographer rapped upon the door.

"Miss Dutton," he said, after admitting her, "please take these letters carefully. Make no copies, and when you've finished tear up all the notes." Scarce had he finished his dictation, when Dubledieh1, spick and span as was his invariable wont, stepped gingerly through the door.

"Ready?" he inquired, eyeing Anholt dubiously.

"Bet your life!" The prompt response, so entirely cordial in tone, encouraged the Englishman to step to the desk and appropriate without a "thank you" one of the silver girdled Murias from a hospitable looking box.

"Better fill your case, hadn't you?" and Anholt, diving into a heavy ulster, continued to beam good naturedly upon the astonished visitor, who, with a short "Right O!" proceeded to fill, not his case, but the pockets of his vest.

"When a man's about to look his destiny squarely in the face," added Anholt, "he ought to be cocked and primed, eh?"

"Rather!" returned the other, buttoning up his coat. "What say to a drink on the way over?"

"Better wait until we're through, hadn't we? We'll probably need it then;" a suggestion to which Dubledіehl, with his ever ready "Humph!" signified assent.

Let it be explained that these two men were starting on what the ordinary man would probably designate as a "devilish funny stunt." To visit, in fact, the abode of Astrolo—clairvoyant, hypnotist, and self accredited ambassador of mysticism's God. In the simpler language of the day, they proposed to have their fortunes told. Far be it from us to pass lightly on their intended act. For was not this Dubledіehl a votary at the astrologic shrine? Had he not for long years past, consulted these omniscient seers in every quarter of the globe? Was he not therefore so rich in futures that regardless of the vane's maneuvers it would always point him on to victory and fame? True, his progress had been honeycombed with holes, and his paths seemed strangely tempted to run in circular instead of straight, unbroken lines; but that was a matter up to Providence, and not for him to correct or mourn about. Still, now that Anholt had mentioned it, he really would like to know just when the atmosphere would clear—about what time the cornucopia would yield its promised fruit. And if, since Astrolo was the king pin of them all, and Anholt's friend to boot, he could secure a reduction of the customary price, all the dictates of self interest, thrift and prudence appeared to justify a consultation with this inspired adviser of the shaded room. Furthermore, he intended to learn a little on the side, both of Anholt and of the company's prospects for going up the spout. In short, he proposed to get his money's worth—and more, if possible. As for Anholt—well, suppose just now we let that question rest. Had he not treated the Englishman gracefully? Had he not arranged this interview and thereby saved his companion no less than fifty cents? Had he not left his work to personally introduce him to this chieftain of his tribe? And did he not propose himself to look behind the veil? What more in reason could one want to know?

Now this Astrolo was an up-to-date and a very busy man. He occupied a mansion, not a flat. You could see him by appointment only, and that meant an interview with the ebony hued attendant at the door. He was a modern of the moderns, despite his calling or his name. His house was a marvel of twentieth century art; the furnishings as distant from the Orient as was the house itself. A master of his art, he lived in regal style, selecting his clientele with the same cautious discrimination that marked their choice in coming to his door. In appearance he was the ideal business man; fairly tall, well proportioned, carefully groomed, courteous, intelligent, and never out of sorts. His moustache and hair were gray; his face, when in repose was like unto thousands one meets at every turn; in action it breathed a power holding one helpless as a child. The eyes were magnets—irresistible, unevadable, and merciless in seeking for the truth. At such times his personality assumed a superhuman cast. Few who saw him thus would afterward call him either charlatan or cheat. Such was the man from whom Dubledіehl expected much; whom he had haggled with on terms; and who, wonderful enough, had acceded to his demand for a discount off for cash. Little wonder that the Englishman, who with Anholt had now been graciously received, should feel some slight misgivings as to getting entirely what he sought.

From behind an elaborate flat topped desk, Astrolo glanced first at Anholt, then turned his curious gaze on Dubledіehl's expectant face. There was nothing mysterious about the room; nothing consistent with one's preconceived ideas of the setting in which this star of mystics would be found. It might, so far as eye could see, be the office of some successful, studious medical practitioner. As for oppressive draperies and subdued light, they were less in evidence than in the bed room of one's home.

"Gentlemen,"—the voice was low but incisive,—"I can divide one hour between you. I should prefer to deal with each of you alone. Will that be satisfactory?"

"Humph!" Dubledіehl answered the inquiring words and look. "Rather! I don't see that my affairs concern anybody else,"—a reply to which Astrolo smiled approvingly.

"That being settled I hold myself at your disposal, gentlemen. Who, may I ask, will consult me first?"

"With Mr. Dubledіehl's consent," said Anholt, "I think I'd better face the music now. I'm pretty busy, you understand."

"Quite right!" assented his companion, observing neither a hidden meaning to the words, nor the significant movement of the other's eyes. "I'll just take a look around," he added, with which remark he arose and began a careful appraisement of the paintings and novelties of art scattered about the place. Astrolo, motioning Anholt to follow, stepped quietly into a small, adjoining room, furnished simply with a small table and two chairs. The bare, dark tinted walls were uninviting to the eye. Nothing, save a swaying crystal ball, held by a cord well nigh invisible, gave resting place for gaze or thoughts. The door was closed. Dubledіehl, having completed his valuation of the room's equipment, resorted to a cigar, meanwhile indulging in wild conjectures as to the income such a genius must derive. Fifteen minutes passed; then Anholt, with gloom enshrouded face re-entered, mumbled a few unintelligible words, which might perhaps by effort, have been construed as wishing the other better luck, and with a faint "So long!" hurried from the house. If, as he passed along the street, his melancholy air was succeeded by a quite contented look, was not the change probably due to some peculiar quality of the Chicago atmosphere, rather than because of anything occurring since his exit from Astrolo's home? And if, during the ensuing afternoon, an impressive looking envelope, accompanied by a small cylindrical package carefully wrapped and sealed, was delivered to him in person by a dark faced messenger, who, by adding this and that together, could find in the occurrence an explanation for the smile and sigh betokening relief?

As for Dubledіehl, unless he voluntarily corrects us, shall we not assume that he was satisfied with what the stars revealed?

CHAPTER X.

Now, in the course of Anholt's multifarious duties, worries, and charitable acts, it came to pass that David Eastman, on vindication bent, induced Mrs. Nancy Mickle, victim of that still mysterious theft, to call upon his friend; the result being, curiously enough, that Mr. S. Landseer Dubledіehl, who chanced unexpectedly about, became straightway the provider of her material wants and the guarantor of certain hospital expenses yet to come. It resulted likewise in a lurid demonstration of the illogicalness of woman's love and the perversity of man, with Anholt's office as a stage on which forgiveness cowered before indifference and denials battled truth. And incidentally, let us state, it resulted in Anholt's seeing some twenty dollars plus some thirty more which he had long since given up for lost. For was not this Dubledіehl a sensitive and a gallant cuss; the last to see a woman want or a friend left in the lurch? And was not his disregard for money further emphasized that day, when his cablegrams to Scotland crowded other business off the deck, and the Gulf Stream's temperature jumped suddenly because of sizzling wires? No one assuredly will deny the hearty satisfaction which he claimed to feel when Anholt, casually inquiring the sailings of the next Glasgow boats, expressed an inclination to smell salt air again. Of course the days were damp and the weather enervating although in winter months, and Dubledіehl, having performed his duties like a man, feeling physically indisposed, deserved a short vacation before his much respected friend should sail. All of which may or may not explain a certain stillness in the atmosphere which some wise man contends presages storms. But let not our belief in the infallibility of this contention delude us with false hopes. A storm just now, with a ripening harvest in the field, was the last thing Anholt could afford to have. Not because of the irreparable financial injury to himself involved, but because of the inevitable loss the men he served would experience, both in prestige and in means. Now that the desperate Dubledіehl stood revealed in his iniquity it would be useless to attempt a stoppage of the tempest unless the Managing Director moved

full tilt; a fact which Anholt recognized and to which he bowed his head. He alone could void his contract. The other Directors of the company could not. They had asked no questions of him direct, concerning his sad and checkered past. He had misrepresented nothing, unless indeed such act lay in his silence. He had served them loyally and well, but his greatest service, voluntary on his part, was now about to come.

"The whole truth, dearest," he had said to Dorothy in speaking of Dubledіehl and the contemplated trip, "is this: The man is a despicable character; a menace greater to the company than to myself; but if he goes, I've got to go, and that, sweetheart, is exactly what I propose to do. I haven't now, and I never at any time have had a right to hold this job. I'm not entitled to a position anywhere with other people's money in my hands. It's a truth that all the sophistry in the world can't get around. Because of villainy in some other man I can't expect to save my employers if the truth comes out. I've made this company a success. I can step out now with honor and with the confidence of the men I serve. I don't propose to tell them everything, but I'll put my resignation in a way that will save myself and them. And you, and I, and the little one, dearest, will go off somewhere and buy a piece of land with what little we have now, and be responsible to nobody but ourselves. It's the only way—it's the only chance in all the world for us to live half way in peace. As to Dubledіehl, I'll keep the worst facts to myself. I feel—I don't know why, that some day they will prove a shield. But I do intend that our Directors shall know enough to warrant his discharge; enough to force his cousin and himself, in self protection, to keep silence about what they know of me. Do you know, sweetheart," he continued, "that when you came back East to me, I thought I knew what path to take? In the crash that followed I saw where I was wrong. I still had temporized, unwittingly 'tis true, with the tendency to err. All my thoughts were turned toward the end; too seldom did I pay attention to the means. My promises were too often built on hopes, and when they were blasted everything fell through. And then, dear, you remember I made a pledge. I would follow the path that Stanley Hope mapped out, unwaveringly, persistently, so long as I had power to think or do. I kept that promise, as I believed, faithfully to this day. But still, dearest,

I find I was at fault. Our shareholders believed that I had never committed wrong. Because of this they trusted me. Because of this, as much as by any reason of the profits earned, they hold their shares and endeavor to buy more. And yet a single rumor touching on my shame would for a time at least smash the stock to smithereens, and make these men the laughing stock of friends. If this should happen I'd be as big a thief as any man behind the bars. And that's the one thing I'm going to make an effort to prevent. I'll lose my profits, true, but what is that, sweetheart, to their respect and—yours?"

"It does seem hard though," Dorothy had remarked, taking his hand, "that you should have to suffer and lose so much because of such a man."

"He's not to blame, dearie. It's my own, not his sins I must pay for now. Perhaps I owe him thanks, because it's through his knavery that I've come to a realization of my own mistake. Anyhow, love," he added, with a tighter pressure on her hand, "to find one's self—that, after all, is the greatest victory in life." Truly with this man a long and patient hunt, with brushes high and little sunshine through the leaves o'erhead.

Sitting thus, he thought of Marie, whose one sin lay in the dim and distant past; and of Bob, with his crime of yesterday. There was the vision of his mother, and wife, and babe—and of Marie's babe; all, whether with innocence or guilt, bearing the burden of a wrong.

What a sermon! What a text! What a pleading in defense of right! What an argument against deceit! What a lesson of today, persuading men when learned, to paths of virtue, caution and peace insuring truth; when ignored, condemning them to shame and unconquerable remorse!

Time and again his thoughts reverted back to Bob, the man he had tried so desperately to save. Notwithstanding all evidence to the contrary he believed him innocent of the greater charge. He had written to him—told him so, but from the poor fellow direct no reply had come. He had employed counsel, who frankly stated that his fee was so much money thrown away. He had urged Cunningham and Powers to enlist the League in the accused man's behalf and learned that Withers and his faction refused to countenance its aid. Hope, Storey and Bishop, the men on whom he could rely until the end, could not be reached. His only

chance lay through the use of gold intelligently placed, and now his own position robbed the unfortunate one of that sole remaining hope. He could have arranged it—perhaps afforded it, by endeavoring to hold his position until his company's fiscal year had closed; but that involved the risk of his own dishonor, and the possible ruination of the men who trusted him. It was Bob's life against the welfare of himself, his company and the ones he loved—Bob's death the awful thing encouraged by his hope for peace; if peace indeed could flourish in such doubtful kind of soil.

Such was the current of his thoughts; such the problem which this man, ever inclined to subordinate the practical to the idealistic view, was called upon to solve. With our understanding of his character shall we not, because of this, dignify his partial desertion of this friend as one of the bravest actions of his life?

CHAPTER XI.

The Honorable Albert Finley Bell gathered the various letters, cablegrams and notes scattered about the table, into a single bundle, around which he snapped a rubber band.

"So you see, Mr. Anholt," he remarked, "it isn't news to us"— referring thereby both to the Managing Director's disclosure of certain questionable acts committed by Dubledieh1, and the villifying tactics adopted by the latter in attempting to further his own ends at his former benefactor's cost. "I must say," he added, "on behalf of the Board, that we consider our Secretary's actions perfectly outrageous—abominable. Why, in this country we should call that lathe transaction a crime. I can't understand the man at all."

Anholt, wondering what the Chairman's opinion would be of Dubledieh1's more serious offenses, smiled and returned a sheet of memoranda to his pocket.

"You have the facts, gentlemen."

"Oh! we must discharge him and get a new Secretary at once." The Chairman's words met with the nodded approval of his associates. "We can't afford to keep such a scalawag in our employ," he continued; "it's disgraceful."

"I think," observed Mr. Crowley, who never spoke except after mature deliberation, "Mr. Anholt used very good judgment in bringing these matters direct to us; much better than if he had acted himself."

"Unquestionably!" agreed the Chairman. "I'm sure he understands the Board approves his course."

"We wish Mr. Anholt to feel"—again Mr. Crowley spoke; "that as a Board we propose to stand behind him, especially"—the ever present germ must manifest itself—"since he has created such a tremendous trade for us."

"You forget, gentlemen, that my decision to resign is irrevocable."

The quiet, convincing words recalled them to a consideration of their Managing Director's expressed determination to leave their service. After

a glance at his fellow Directors the Honorable Albert Finley Bell answered Anholt with a voice and manner in which a touch of annoyance was clearly visible.

"But we can't understand your insisting on what I must call a rash and most unnecessary act. Why, it would injure our company frightfully—."

"Especially," supplemented the athletic appearing Mr. Jones, "if you were to desert us right after we've bounced Dubledіehl for dishonesty. With our Secretary discharged and our Managing Director resigned, our shares would drop to a pretty figure, wouldn't they? A jolly nice mess we'd be in!" after saying which he reached for the Scotch and soda—necessary adjunct to all well regulated meetings of the kind.

"I am sure," said Mr. Crowley, looking up from the paper on which he had been doing a bit of rapid mathematical work, "that since Mr. Anholt understands we endorse his actions he will reconsider taking the proposed step. I've figured his profits, at the rate orders are coming in, will amount to nearly six thousand pounds under his contract. You see," he continued, turning to Anholt, "you couldn't afford to lose that."

The latter, about to reply, was stopped by the Chairman's further expression of astonishment at his contemplated course. "It's most incomprehensible," he exclaimed, "that you should think of such a suicidal thing! Why, Fred. Dubledіehl and MacDougal would harry the life out of us."

"Not with the whip I've given you," replied Anholt. "Besides, you've got the business, and that's what regulates the price of your shares—or it ought to, anyhow. Gentlemen,"—after a minute's pause; "I appreciate your confidence. I recognize the motives influencing you in refusing to accept my resignation; but believe me, your interest lies in the elimination of both Landseer Dubledіehl and myself from all connection with your company. Fred. Dubledіehl has hammered it since the day we began doing business, and that bunch of stuff there,"—pointing to the bundle in the Chairman's hands,—"explains why. That—and what I've told you. And he isn't going to stop until I'm out; depend on that."

"But Mr. Anholt," Mr. Crowley took occasion to say; "as long as we are the only losers and are satisfied—."

"I know," said Anholt; "but if you're satisfied to lose and to see the shareholders lose, I'm not. You can get a thousand abler men for the place, and not have the company discredited at every turn. The fact that I'm surrendering my profits ought to show that I'm acting for what I believe is your good, and not my own. I understand the conditions in America better than you do. I understand the motives behind these attacks better than you do, and I understand the circumstances which absolutely prohibit your company from achieving a creditable and permanent success while I manage its business in the States. I'm either insane or I know what I'm talking about. However you decide that point the result must be the same—the appointment of another man to fill my place."

When Anholt stopped speaking, the Chairman glanced interrogatively at the faces of the other Directors. Satisfied that he had correctly interpreted their nods, he leaned over and replaced the accusatory documents in the desk drawer with an air intended to convey the idea that what he was about to say should be construed as final.

"Unless you can submit some stronger argument in support of your contemplated resignation, Mr. Anholt, we must decline to accept it. As I understand it, you are permitting a row between yourself and Dubledichls, about which our company has nothing to do, to influence you in adopting a course decidedly incompatible with our best interests. A very foolish, and I really must say, from you, a most unlooked for action. As to these scurrilous reports about your debts and personal extravagances, they only confirm the information we already possessed about their authors. It is most aggravating to you, I am sure, but we cannot consider it as in any way our business, and we must insist for that reason, upon your retaining your position and complying with the letter of your contract."

With his concluding remark the Honorable Albert Finley Bell prepared to take up the next matter in the order of business. It was entirely obvious to Anholt, since no formal vote on the subject of his resignation had been taken, that a disinclination existed among his fellow Directors to having the matter placed upon the minutes; a sufficient reason for his ceasing, for the time being, to make a more extended argument on his own behalf.

At the first meeting of the Board, following the company's flotation, a resolution had been passed authorizing Mr. Crowley to proceed to America at his earliest convenience, examine the proposed plant, and make such investigation of conditions generally as would enable him to intelligently advise his associate Directors on matters necessitating such information before they could be finally disposed of. By reason first of his sudden and prolonged illness, and secondly owing to the unexpected progress Anholt had made in securing profitable business, the journey had been time and again postponed, until by common consent the resolution, a short time prior to the present meeting, had been repealed. Inasmuch as the company's books were regularly inspected and the financial statements checked up by the Chicago branch of an English firm of auditors, the Board was reasonably safe in assuming that phase of the business to be properly cared for. For that reason, until the present time, their entire knowledge of the situation had been derived from the letters of their Managing Director and Dubledichl, together with the brief reports forwarded them by the auditing concern. Having this in mind, and in view of his intended severance of relations with the Gear interests, Anholt determined to urge the adoption of a new resolution insuring a thorough examination into the company's present condition and prospects by either Mr. Crowley or such other Director as the Board might nominate. In this decision lay a two-fold purpose. First, it would provide him with a certificate of character in so far as his management of the business was concerned; a document, as it were, guaranteeing him exemption from responsibility for a successor's possible mistakes—mistakes, the result of which are too frequently charged to the delinquencies of a predecessor in the efforts to clear a present incumbent's skirts. Secondly, it meant the presence in Chicago, of a company official empowered to act promptly, decisively, and in accordance with the dictates of his judgment, whenever and wherever such action might be required; an arrangement indispensable to the consummation of the plan Anholt had already formulated, and which, should he be unsuccessful in forcing an acceptance of his resignation, he proposed to put in early execution.

As for ripping the curtain from his own disfigured past, and in its nakedness exposing the still running, quivering wound—that would but add to the torture without a compensation attainable, as he believed, through far less painful means. Nor was he, with the Directors' expressions of undiminished confidence still ringing in his ears, courageous—or foolish enough, to pose now as a Valjean, whose last act of atonement would be found in his voluntary surrender of the respect which these men had extended him, together with his well earned profits and whatever future his association with his fellow Directors might imply. He would sacrifice the last two willingly, but the first, he hoped through diplomacy to retain. And if, between diplomacy and subterfuge a distinction lies, which somehow leaves their meaning one, and if the respect of honest men is doubly strengthened by a frank confession of our sins, who, even so, would be quite bold enough to cast the first stone at this man, now standing at the abyss of his guilt and dizzied by the visions playing in its depths?

His purpose, deftly masked as a mere suggestion and broached at the time he deemed most opportune, met with the unqualified approval of the Board. Whether because it presented the desired opportunity of conciliating Anholt by means of a concession easily made, or because the Directors deemed such action necessary in fortifying themselves against the inevitable Dubledichl assault, was an entirely negligible consideration so far as their Managing Director was concerned. The result of their acquiescence would be the same. It was arranged that Mr. Crowley, leaving within the coming week, should prepare himself to remain, if necessary, for an extended period in the States. Anholt would sail immediately on the final disposition of such matters as required his personal cooperation with the Board. This being settled, the two succeeding days were devoted to elaborating the company's policy along such lines as in the present light of things seemed advisable, and to the acquisition by them all of a better understanding of the progress thus far made.

Now Anholt, stopping at the Caledonian Hotel, had certain troubles quite apart from those directly attributable to his enforced silence on his resignation scheme. There were cablegrams that told of Dubledichl's high handed ways; of an adverse jury verdict in the case of Bob; of a

prospective order of arrest to await him on return and to be sworn out in New York City; by whom and on what charge, his informant, who, the cable stated, was merely acting on a hint the Englishman had dropped, could not tell. Then there were callers, who in persistence made up most fully for what they in numbers may have lacked. Need time be wasted in telling who they were? And since we've either got to feed—or shoot the wolf, to quiet his incessant howling at the door, perhaps allowance should be made for Anholt's nod directed to the page, who forthwith bowed one of the obstreperous visitors to his room.

"Ah, Mr. Anholt! I'm charmed, really—most charmed, I assure you!" and the bushy whiskers of Mr. Donald MacDougal performed an elliptical movement which threatened to include a sweeping of the floor.

"And I," said Anholt, "am so overwhelmed with curiosity that I can't arise—in fact, can't raise my hand;" which latter fact his caller already had observed. "You understand, of course," he added, studying the little fellow with a cold, uncompromising air, "that I'm busy. So cut out these social preliminaries and get straight down to turkey — or crow, whichever way you feel. You might sit down though," and with a scarcely perceptible gesture the speaker indicated a seat.

"Oh! I say now, Mr. Anholt, you're ungenerous." The voice wavered between a pipe and whine. "Your success has turned you—assuredly turned you, I am afraid, against your friends. It's deucedly—."

"What do you want?" The sharp, sudden words, halted the bobbing whiskers at an angle imperilling their wearer's neck, while the body, startled for an instant into rigidity, appeared dangerously near tumbling from the chair. With the subsidence of the shock, articulation came to life.

"Why I—Mr. Anholt, I simply—"

"What—do—you—want?" Something decidedly ominous in the long drawn words and accompanying gesture started the Scotchman's mind to working at a surprisingly accelerated gait.

"Mr. Anholt, will you permit me to ex—."

By this time the American was on his feet. "What in Hell I let you in for," he exclaimed passionately, starting for the door, "I don't know!

Now *get!*" For the first time in months an oath had crossed his lips. With one hand on the knob and the other pointing to the hall, he seemed to MacDougal's excited mind the incarnation of all the wild and maniacal traits ascribed to the barbarous Americans by the religion on which British Provincials were fed. But, as intimated pages back, this Scot was anything but a fool, and the members of his clan the last to take backwater at a threat. Still, he was discreet, and that just now meant saying something definite and with very slight ado. Hence the hasty, jerky spouting of a few illuminating words.

"How much did Freddie pay you on this deal?"

Anholt closed the door with a bang. "So ho!" he thought; "methinks I smell a thickening of the plot." Crossing the room he faced his alarmed and former associate.

"Three thousand pounds."

Once more the whiskers stood at prompt attention. "Oh, really! Is that—you must pardon me—was that really all?"

"Not a sixpence more, MacDougal. Why? Hurt?"

Now in the face of a great surprise the nervous little gentleman could never quite compose himself without first flopping about considerably on his seat; an exercise which at this point resulted in his unceremonious precipitation to the floor, thereby coupling physical soreness to mental injury, and providing a situation responsible for the disclosure of another piece of curious business in Frederick Dubledichl's career.

"I meant," exclaimed Anholt, stifling a laugh, "financially; though now the query would seem to work two ways."

There was no particular observable reason why MacDougal should, having regained his feet, stand blinking fiercely at the fire, or continue pulling at the furnishings on his face. It might perhaps, be his method of determining what to say; an interpretation by Anholt of his actions, which proved to be correct.

"Oh!"—now the little man was shouting—"I shall publish him! You must, Mr. Anholt—you must, really, see my solicitor with me at once! Freddie's a rouge! Fifteen hundred pounds—I'm defrauded of

that, Mr. Anholt! Think of it—fifteen hundred pounds! You must—I must insist you go——."

"I'll go nowhere, MacDougal, and I'll see no solicitor—understand? This is the damndest mixed up, cut-throat game I ever saw or heard tell of. You and Fred and Landseer Dubledіehl, and your whole rotten bunch of knaves are only getting what you bought—and for that matter, so am I, because I helped the dirty deal along. Bah! you cowards make me sick." Then Anholt hawked and spit as if he were physically instead of mentally ill.

MacDougal was moving to and fro before the grate, with a step fanciful enough to indicate the lively and effervescent condition of his brain.

"I protest, really," he finally managed to exclaim, "against such language—and I protest most vigorously! Why, Freddie has reports about you——."

"MacDougal, it's no particular pleasure to me to be obliged to interrupt you every time you open your mouth, but I've had enough of this. Will you go now, or have I got to throw you out?"

With all due respect to the valor of the McDougal clan, let it be said that no member had yet been known to ease the headsman's task by supinely resting on the block, while his executioner jollied along a crowd. *Semper paratus*, the tribal motto, they held referred as fully to escape as it ever did to death. And this particular MacDougal—well, he was a MacDougal.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" muttered Anholt as he walked to the window and gazed at the gloomy castle; "Old Sherman certainly was right, only he should have called it company promotion instead of war." Lowering his eyes they caught and followed the figure of his erstwhile visitor scurrying across Princess street, his bristling whiskers breathing defiance to humanity in general, and eternal damnation to the gear crowd in particular. "If that jack-in-a-box," soliloquized the American, "should meet Fred Dubledіehl now, I'd never see the morning train. What in thunder does Dubledіehl want anyhow? You'd think he'd try to hide his tail. Well, he can't see me—that's flat!

Gad! I wish I could have forced my resignation on the Board. I hate to leave them cold." For a full half hour he pondered thus; until in fact, the distant hill had faded into night. "Oh, well!"—the words had succeeded to a weary sigh; "in the end it's my sacrifice, not theirs, and—I'm satisfied it's the only thing to do—the only honorable thing."

He walked to the grate and poked the dying coals. Somehow his thoughts still clung tenaciously to the contemplated act. Then he stood with his right arm resting on the mantel, his left hand swinging the poker back and forth. "Samuels, our manager," he went on, "can help the new man out. Suppose—suppose I did try to hang on for a time, and that rumor about—arresting me, should happen to prove true. Great Guns, what a market for the bears! Of course they'd throw the case right out of court, but then—the damage would be done. Anholt, old man, you've got henceforth to cut all business out; to let the interests of all other men alone. You've got to tear away to God's own free, unbroken soil; to solitude and manual labor if you hope for peace of mind. Perhaps there, in time, your way will clear to better things. If not"—he seemed now as one who saw some strangely comforting dream—"if, as the years pass by, your inspirations waver in the face of doubt; if ambitions settle into mere content; if materialism triumphs over the ideal; if the mission that you've cherished succumbs to sober facts; and yet with it all you still possess the blessings of a home—well then, so let the will of God be done!"

* * * * *

Ten days later—on Sunday, March the twenty-seventh, to be exact, the Managing Director of The Schnelhauser Gear of America, Limited, walked into the Chicago office of that company. One man—Dubledieh, was there. Neither spoke. In fifteen minutes Anholt prepared to leave. About to pass the Englishman, he stopped, smiled, placed the bundle he was carrying carefully on a desk, and with the utmost precision, speed, and pleasure undisguised—knocked the fellow down.

CHAPTER XII.

In a stateroom of the Overland Limited, leaving the Chicago Union Station at ten o'clock the following morning, Anholt busied himself with various bags, wraps and parcels, on the skillful disposition of which depended largely the travelers' comfort. Dorothy, having nursed her bewildered babe into a state of temporary forgetfulness, placed it carefully on the cushioned seat, assured herself time and again that by no chance could it possibly roll off, and then—the inevitable question that makes all women kin the world around:

"Are you sure, dear, you've got the baggage all checked right?"

"My dear girl," replied the husband, eyeing dubiously first the luggage rack and then the package in his hand, "the baggage smashers offered to stand the excess charges if I'd get out and give the next fellow a chance. Fact is, they looked over the counter to see if I didn't wear skirts. It's a blessed lucky thing though," he added after a finally successful effort to make the bundle stick, "that we rented that house furnished, isn't it?"

Dorothy, as the train sped through what had so recently been the city of her hopes, made no reply. Her eyes, fastened on the fleeting walls of stone, told nothing of the thoughts that stirred her mind. Anholt, having finished his task, sat down beside her, placing his hand upon her softer, welcoming one. She turned toward him, with a smile so obviously forced as to intensify rather than ameliorate his own feeling of worriment.

"Do you know, Van," she said, using her free hand to stroke the back of his; "I'm so afraid Mr. Crowley will be angry on his arrival at the office today? Are you entirely sure, dear, that he can manage to get along?"

"Dearest, there isn't any doubt about it. Samuels knows the details even better than I do myself. As a matter of fact he'd make a rattling good Managing Director. I've left him power of attorney to act for

me wherever it's necessary, and between him and Mr. Crowley they can make out in bully shape. So far as his being angry is concerned, he'll soon get over that. I left him a letter stating plainly that I'm going away for good, and he's got no alternative but to put another man in charge. They refused my resignation before. Now they've got to accept it willy-nilly, for their own protection. George Harry, if they could only understand what a danger I've relieved them of!" The sigh following the concluding words was audible above the noise of the speeding train.

"But, Van, dear"—the tremor of anxiety still was manifest—"do you think they'll ever understand?"

"Will they!" He released his hand and stared at her with a half astonished, half injured air. "Well, just you wait and see! They'll not only understand, but they'll respect me—yes, and thank me, too. Those Directors are *men,* not Dublediehls. That reminds me"—struck by a sudden thought he began scratching his head—"about that letter from Withers to Dublediehl! I don't believe the old man told him anything or I certainly would have heard about it. Why he wrote though, I can't for the life of me make out. I suppose now, Dublediehl, on getting fired, will poke his nose around New York. That's the——."

The conductor's entrance, on his round for tickets, brought the conjecturing to an abrupt close. When they were alone again, Anholt who had arisen, pointed toward the rack.

"You know that package up there, you're so curious about?"

Dorothy nodded.

"Well, if S. Landseer Dublediehl ever comes my way again, there's his finish!" which enigmatical remark was the nearest approach to an explanation that his wife received for many months to come about that most carefully wrapped and guarded box. He resumed his seat by the little woman's side and both lapsed into silence, their eyes resting on a passing landscape that left no impression on the brain. The sunshine playing on the fields; the emerald tinge that found its birth in tender shoots of wheat; the budding trees; the turquoise blue, seeming to breathe tranquility on earth no less than in the sky; the gaping

furrows, freshly turned, and prophetic of a coming wealth—all were looked upon but never seen by either man or wife.

Aroused in time by the waiter's call for lunch, which call had incidentally brought the baby back from dreamland—a way which babies have of waking at the most inopportune of times—Dorothy gave expression to one of many thoughts.

"I do wonder," she remarked, taking the little one in her arms, "if Marie really would come West to us."

"That's what she said, sweetheart, when I saw her in New York." It was a relief to Anholt to have some excuse to talk. "And Davey, he's bound to come—so he says, anyhow. If I could only induce mother to come, and then inveigle Storey and Bishop, we could occupy a county to ourselves. Ye gods, what a healthy looking lot of farmers! and if——."

Oh! man, man! must this thing always be? Are you to never know one hopeful, happy inspiration free from assassination in its birth? In all your life is there to be no act, no memory, no thought but what has ending in despair and gloom? You would have mentioned Bob, when recollection came in all its hideous garb and struck you dumb. For Bob—your protegé—your friend, has ceased to be. Bob, the lad to whom you were the prince of men; Bob, whose soul was won and lost in the giving and withdrawal of your hand; Bob—thoughtless, lovable, and faltering along his strange, uncertain way; robbed when the agony was most intense, of his sole support by you; Bob—unresentful, generous and considerate as the shadows fell; Bob—Bob, had sought beyond the Great Divide the peace denied him here.

"Why, Van, dear! what in the world is the matter? You stopped—you look so pale." Again her spoken words had brought the man relief. He could at least combat his thoughts with speech.

"I was thinking, dearest, of Bob. To think—to think that he—that Bob should hang himself—should take his life!"

"You mustn't—you must try, dear, to forget it." She couldn't take his hand again; the baby rested in her arms. She could only utter soothing words. "And perhaps it was for the best. You know, dear,

you couldn't have helped him now. You did try—so hard; and the next day they would have sentenced him to be——. Oh! Oh! Bob—poor, dear, unhappy boy!" and tears fell upon the pink cheeks of a wondering babe, and the mind of woman claimed its inalienable right.

The husband, stooping to the floor, brought forth two envelopes from a bag. One was filled with papers, time worn and written in the language of the French. From the other he extracted first a locket, through wear now but a fragile shell. When opened the miniature of a woman—sweet faced. intelligent and fair, reposed within the frame of gold. No inscription gave an inkling of her name. The man transferred this to his pocketbook. He took the letter that accompanied it—the letter which, for three days past had awaited him at home. He kissed his wife—then the chubby infant, and leaving them sought the smoking compartment. He found it untenanted, and seated himself in its solitary chair to read. No cigar—no attention to the porter reminding him that luncheon had been called—nothing was noticed by him, either outside or within the car, except this farewell message from his friend:

"Dear boss. Im askin Jimmy ORourke to send you sum papers what hes got of mine and wich bein in sum foren gab I dont no gist what they are but wich the old wommen what raised me kep. When you git this boss yours trooly will be a stif. I cant stand fer this no longer wich not havin you no more to tie to and doin no good liven and seein as how they fixed me anyhow Im goin to fergit it. It aint no use to con myself nor you with thinkin Im worth a su even if I git out of this here deel wich I cant no more and I never wud have writ you nohow only since Im goin to pas it up. I aint carin a dam what guys thinks about this here Essingham job only you. He wuz a piker anyhow and a dirty bloke but you wuz wite and it aint your falt Im suckin this lemmen whats bein handed out to me. Thats why Im writin this to you bein me only frend sos you no Im an innicent man. Now boss I tell you gist how it comes to hapen and it wuz gist this way honest to god. I wuz all in and loosin me mind fer the dope. Dident I try to make good when you left wich it wuz gist like nite. And no way I turned but what sum mut or plane clothes bull throes the hooks in me and grafts all I pul in on the stand. What wuz the use fer me to snifil to your wimmin fokes seein as how likes not you wuz havin your own trubbles. And me goin to skool nites wich you can see by this hand

writin till the perfesser he gits wize to me and gives me money back any sez skidew wich tryin hard to lurn I wuzent lookin fer. So noin I wuzzent no good only when I had the dope and not havin nobody carin nohow I gist nachurly fell fer a free handout fer a braser wich onct havin it kep me goin fer more. Gist as you sed boss noin how it wud be and me havin no nurve to stop I sold the joint intenden to come to you thinkin if you wud speel to me good and hard I cud qwit. Wich thinkin it over and seein as how I lade down on you and not carin to see mister Storry no more him not understanden me I tuk to the wuds wich is to say with old billy Wisel on the west side noin him as slidin to hell with coke claimin he had catar to. Havin the do we lodes up with the reel stuf it doin more good until I gos brok and havin gone the limmit I figgered on sneekin a pinch in the dope shop, seein as how me only chanct wuz coppen it at nite. Im tellen the honest gods truth boss noin its me to anser fer what Im sayin now to the holy savier. Sos thats how I comes to be sneekin the stuf in Bektels plase noin where he kep it when the fly cop moozies along wich when he sees me I skidews. Thinken to luk around and seein as how he wuz pullen his gun I throed the rock to git him intenden he wud stop fer a minnit. Thats everything I no about it boss. I cross my hart wich I hope you will beleve me bein as how Im goin to qwit the game tonite. I want you to no Im sorry fer not havin made good wich I aint wurth your worrin over but I hopes you will kinder smooth the hard feelins down a bit when you reed this. I dont no where Im goin boss wich tho it cant be wurse than this is but I wish I wuz goin where mabe I cud see you agin sos to no what it wuz to see one frend whats on the level. Im senden you a little soovner boss thinkin mabe you wudent mind and wich wuz always hangin around me neck. I dont no who it is but sum sez the wommen in it luks like me. I asks you to keep it boss mabe lukin at it sumtime and rememberen I wanted to be wite like you only not havin your hand no more I dident somehow no gist how alone. Deer boss Im goin soon and when mornin comes I hopes the sun will keep on shinin fer you whats got an angel wommen to keep you standin up wich a good wommen wuz what I never had. I seen her prayen fer you one time boss wich wud you mind askin her mabe to plug fer me gist now and then. I wisht gist onct I cud uv had her kiss me sos to have somethin pure like on me mind when the glim goes out. Boss Im shakin your hand what done so much fer me. Im biddin you good by.

with respetfuly Yours.

Bob.

PART THREE

CHAPTER I.

A country whose tawny, undulating soil, dignified as a setting for golden acres of sun-caressed and ripening grain, lies blistering in the white glow of a torrid noonday orb. A landscape of the Dakotas, where the first quickening of a mother earth bespeaks the foothills further west—the children of the Rockies—progeny of the mighty, snow-capped, everlasting hills. The smoking coach of a transcontinental train, in which conventionalities are defied, and coats and collars, cuffs and ties, having first been roundly cursed, are cast promiscuously on rack and seat and floor. In which each traveler's mouth is graced by pipe, cigar or cigarette, and where, despite the overpowering heat, the bottle diligently makes its rounds. Where card games flourish and double pedro rules the roost. Where play is low and voices high, and where no one cares a continental what the other fellow thinks. That is, of course, exceptions always prove the rule. Therefore, we must except the one game furthest down the aisle, where that big fellow clings to collar and his black alpaca coat; where the little one, dealing, manages—God alone knows how!—to keep as cool as Cheyenne on a winter's day, and who neither talks nor smiles, nor brandishes cigar; and where their two opponents—drummers, self-professed, find business too engrossing to particularize about their wares.

Thus we have location, train and occupants in our mental eye; true, a trifle hazy, but still enough to do. Let us, therefore, transfer events to past from present tense. The conductor came along, stopped and patiently awaited the big man's final play.

"High, low, jack, double pedro and out, gentlemen!" and then on looking up, "Well, conductor are we getting there?"

"The blue-clothed official conspicuously displayed his book for cash receipts. "You're getting away from there, sir. Beaver Junction was the last stop we made. Where do you go to now?"

The giant stared first at his antithesis, who promptly closed his eyes; then again at the extended palm, and from there to its owner's face.

"My friend," he said, "Divinity doth speak through you, and thus chastiseth me for keeping vulgar company;" at which the closed eyes opened wide, and two gentlemen began a mental diagnosis of their fellow-player's words.

The quiet personage, refraining from closing his eyes again, felt called upon to speak. "There's a song that fits this case," he observed, now looking dreamily upon the fleeting fields; " 'I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my——' "

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!"—the sweltering representative of a greedy and unsentimental road had calculated that his passengers were already some fourteen cents ahead. "Your tickets read to Beaver Junction. You'll have to pay from there on—where is it?"

The little fellow now was wide awake. "At the first stop that puts us back to that visionary place," he returned, "or to Red Hill, either one. How much?" Then as an afterthought he added, turning to his companions, "Did anybody hear that brakeman call the place?"

"Not I!"

"Nor I!"

"Well, gentlemen, he called it. Eighty-four cents each to Cody Grove. You'll get a train back at—or hold on! there's a place called Nowhere up the road here, where you can catch a freight straight to your place. Know it? No? It's where the company started to build a town. That's why it's on the schedule. Guess I could drop you there if you say so. That'll be twenty-seven cents apiece."

"I think," remarked he of the unruffled mien, "I'll try about twenty-seven cents worth. Does Brother Storey speak?"

"My friend, since we've passed nothing, Nowhere appeals to me. And if the conductor," he continued, counting out the change, "happens to have a fire alarm on board, he might start it going as the suburbs come in sight."

Now, since train conductors never smile on sultry days, this official's suggestion that he might in addition wire ahead for a motor car and

drinks, impressed Storey as deserving of his last cigar, which he handed out forthwith.

The black-mustached individual, as the conductor went his way, looked at his younger, smooth-faced friend sitting at the minister's right.

"Say, Harry, that's a new one on me, or has this Nowhere got some other name? Where's your time-table?"

"What's the use to look? It's Nowhere on the map, and it's Nowhere on the time-card. That's where the road intended to put up a model depot and town. That's why they called it Nowhere. I never heard of any other place't they ever did. Maybe," he added, in a tone of inquiry, "these gentlemen would like another round."

There was no answer for a time. Then it came in a voice surprisingly low but clear. Bishop—you had already guessed it—had carefully counted out a roll of bills. He shoved them toward the young man, his gaze meanwhile directed to a spot far out upon the plain.

"No more, Coughlan!" The fellow turned upon him like a flash. "But take this, Harry—go home. It's all right—it's fixed. You've only to——"

"God Almighty!" The gambler's mask had disappeared, leaving a staring, ashen face, quivering with a sense of fear. "You're—you're Sunrise—you're Bishop! God! And here—out here!" The trembling hand had clutched the other's sleeve. Bishop *must* have heard, have noticed him—he was neither deaf nor blind. He *must* have observed numerous wondering faces turned questioningly his way. He *must* have caught the alarmed, defiant gleam playing beneath the bristling, bushy eyebrows of the young man's friend. Singular, indeed, that with all of this his face should still remain so calm; that his glance should turn again and hover on that receding knoll, as if some memory lingered there; that his lips, as if communing with himself, should part and utter words which but a single person other than himself could hear—words so few and soft, yet pregnant with inestimable power for good.

"It's all there, Harry—all you lost that night, with interest. Go back—she's there—your mother—waiting. Tell her my last game has been

played." The fingers closing on the bills again, had forced them in the astonished fellow's hand.

"Oh, Mr. Bishop! I——."

"No thanks—nothing, Harry, only—go home!"

A prolonged whistle in lieu of fire alarm. They were in the suburbs. The brakeman raised a warning hand. Some broken words—"I'll go—straight back—tonight." "Good, that's right!"—a hearty handclasp, and then our Metropolitan friends, with ceremony astonishingly scant, were dumped in record time upon the station platform of that funny, sunny, western town called Nowhere.

Along the glistening rails, stretching in one straight, interminable line toward the western shores, the departing train, as if humiliated by the stop, drew itself onward with an increasing, disheartening speed—disheartening, that is, to the strangers in this prairie place, who now stood mute and followed it with hungry eyes; until, in fact, the spot had blended into nothingness. Then slowly, cautiously, eyes met eyes; the big man turned his huge suit case on end, squatted on it with a due amount of care, and with hat removed, applied himself to a vigorous mopping of the face. Bishop, being cool enough, devoted his attention to scrutinizing the town, incidentally venturing the opinion that it's name was "quite all right," and after calling attention to the acreage in the depot yard, suggested stepping over to the nearest hotel for lunch.

Storey, arising, turned to the four points of the compass and then sat down again, remarking that Bismark hadn't impressed him favorably, but that since Billings was only some two hundred miles ahead, his friend might do as he pleased. "You can run over, anyhow, he said, "while I study the architecture hereabouts. Personally, I never care to eat whilst I can enjoy the sights of Nowhere."

"Well," observed Bishop; "the 'Lord tempers the wind,' I've heard you say. I think"—flecking a caterpillar from his sleeve—"I'll reserve car 'A' when the vestibuled freight pulls in;" to which observation the minister replied, that "feeling the necessity for a whole car" to himself, he thought he'd charter "B." His companion side-stepped a particularly

vicious and persistent bug before replying that "such unconscious wit might be attributable to the weather," but that he'd try to make the best of it. He recollected having read somewhere "that hogs were invariably carried in the rear of first-class merchandise," an unfeeling reflection lost on its intended victim, who was suddenly galvanized into action by reason of sundry inquiring insects prospecting down his back, and whose extraordinary agility in covering the adjacent ground lent no small measure of apparent truth to Bishop's philosophical reflection about the other's mental state.

We have said that Nowhere was a funny place. Its human population was a floating one, just now composed of two. Its depot—a platform, twenty feet by ten, time and weather worn, stood less than eighteen inches from the ground. Its architecture was confined—aside from station—to the rounded, conical abodes of industrious ants, with here and there a subway in which some burrowing creature made its home. Its streets had never passed beyond the blue-print stage, while platform, ant-hills, treacherous holes and all, were hidden from the casual eye by a growth of inflammable, thick, and stubborn prairie grass. In the summer there was no place quite so hot—in winter quite so cold. The dismantled platform marked the intersection of the Great Northern Railway, running due east and west, by the Belle Fourche and Minot Road—a haphazard, half-graded affair, starting four miles north of Red Hill, and extending in an air line to Fork River, twenty miles to the south; the intention of the promoters having been to eventually connect with the two places from which it derived its name. The plan of establishing a town at this intersecting point had been evolved by the traffic managers of the two roads, but following the proverbial history of similar experiments in the West, it had never taken a more tangible form than the preliminary survey and two day's carpenter work. Whence the name, or what the allurments incorporated in the companies' circulars bearing on this town to be, remains an undiscoverable secret of the past. But here again the prerogative of perverse man was exercised. The obvious and unexpected met, to the entire discomfiture of the first. Red Hill, an

insignificant siding on a branch road running from that place down to Beaver Junction, began to take on airs, make bi-monthly estimates of its growth in population, talk about the necessity of a mayor and corporate laws, and, in a quiet, unassuming way, appropriate unto itself such prospective settlers as the misguided railroads brought at half rates to Nowhere, and whom they had prematurely booked and labeled as pioneer residents of that altogether impossible place. But time and wisdom grow apace, and corporations like individuals eventually concede they've had enough. Thus nature at last reclaimed her own; the parental obligations of the bugs increased; the caterpillars buckled down to long-neglected cocoon work; subway extensions to handle the expected rush began, and the ponderous engines strutted by with all their old time dignity. A simple explanation—all of this—why no untoward excitement reigned at Storey's wild, gymnastic feats. Bishop, who had managed to form a tolerably comfortable seat with his case and bag, began reckoning the distance his worthy associate had traveled, as indicated by the increasing circles of downtrodden grass.

"I figure, now," he took occasion to comment, as the puffing and perspiring unfortunate clambered again on the shackly platform, "that if you'd gone straight ahead you'd be in Red Hill, or maybe Canada. What you lack is directness, brother."

"My friend," returned the victim, whose back at frequent intervals seemed inclined to strange contortions; "what I lack is a minute degree of common sense. I was a simple, patient and God-fearing man until you inveigled me from the Pullman into that smoking car."

"We saved the man, Storey," urged his friend gently.

"Whenever you or Anholt," continued the minister, disregarding the mild protest, "start on an errand of mercy, you've got to circumnavigate the globe and stir up some new, unholy mess as a preliminary to helping the poor devil out. A modicum of judgment would have suggested our remaining where we were and sending for the lad. Behold us, though, proceeding in accordance with your intelligent program, through a good half mile of coaches, until we wind up next

to the engine in a cattle car. Then follows in proper serial form the other essentials of card game, a trance at Beaver Junction, and a bit of tragedy, all supplemented by the present grand finale. My friend, I shudder!"

"Go ahead! if that's the way it affects you," came the quick retort. "You'll get cooled off in time."

"Trunks back at the Junction; probably lost; dinner at Anholt's getting cold; no train in sight, and I don't believe they run them on this line in hot weather, judging by the rails; and that unregenerate conductor fondling my last cigar! My friend, your conception of the word you mention needs revision." saying which he struck savagely at a passing bug, catching his nose instead.

For the next hour conversation lagged. Bishop, extracting a late French novel from his portmanteau, began to read; an occupation soon superseded by a quiet, and to Storey exasperating doze. As for himself, thus delicately assigned to the thankless duties of a lookout, the minister found ample entertainment of a certain kind in dodging insects, reducing at intermittent stages the quantity of wearing apparel on his back, calculating the depth at which water might be found, and incidentally wondering what new phase of Anholt's character had induced his settling in this God forsaken country.

Fortunately he had asked from which direction the relief train might be expected to come, but his caution had ended there. He had neglected to inquire the time. It might be today—it might be tonight. From all appearances it probably wouldn't come at all. Once a passenger train on the Great Northern passed, eastbound. Then a freight, going the opposite way. Nobody appeared to notice him, and this gave birth to another staggering thought. How would he stop the right train if it should show up? Whereat he interrupted Bishop's dream, just as the latter was lifting a five gallon bottle of bubbling water to his lips.

"My friend, I would converse with thee."

The roused man eyed him curiously; then glanced at the discarded lot of clothes. "I understand," he said; "it's very fine—only Apollo wore

a cape instead of shoes. Where's the swimming hole?" he added, turning to look around.

"This," returned the one addressed, "is merely an overheated Turkish bath, with the entirely captivating prospect of becoming a graveyard later on. Uuless"—tightening the handkerchief about his neck—"the Father in His infinite wisdom sees fit to endow thee with something like mentality. See here, now! what's the surest way to stop a train when there's no station agent around?"

"Tear up a rail!" and the dreamy eyes closed again. "I say!"—suddenly reopening them,—"whence the idea that I'm out here qualifying for a railroad job, or that you're chief examiner for the educational department of the road? There's no further doubt," he added, half to himself; "it's only a matter of time now until he'll be presiding over a meeting of this town's aldermen."

Storey, turning away in disgust, walked to the extreme end of the platform, his loosed suspenders flapping comically against his massive legs. Having duly counted fifty, he walked back again.

"As I recall it," he remarked; "the railroad men, when I was a boy, used a red flag by day and a red light by night. It's quite probable that the rule stills holds. Have you got anything red about you?"

"In the way of flags or lanterns?" asked Bishop. "Sorry, but this being my vacation I left them at home—in the round house. What's the matter with standing out there yourself? You're colored right."

"My friend"—the speaker paused long enough to hitch his trousers up—"Since I was first ordained I've tried, according to my lights, to follow in the footprints of our Lord. There are times however when the spirit writhes. I—plague take that grasshopper! Might I venture to hope that you still wear your liver pad?"

"You might."

"I might! Well, might I—you're right, Bishop; I feel it coming on myself. Hurry up! let me have that pad," and he extended his hand with a grim, determined look.

Bishop, let it be said, harbored one delusion; namely, that his lungs were anything but sound; the result being that he habitually wore a chest

protector of red and heavy flannel, some four inches by eight in size; an article which Storey, by some inexplicable process of reasoning invariably referred to as the other's "liver pad." Hence, the question. It cannot be charged that Bishop was unnecessarily loquacious; in support of which statement we refer to his silent compliance with the singular demand, and to the entire indifference with which, having entrusted the protector to the keeping of his friend, he turned once more to sleep.

It was no difficult task to rip from the decayed flooring a satisfactory handle for this necessity born danger signal, nor yet to find a knot hole wherein to set it, pending the coming of the hoped-for train; an idea of Storey's which induced Bishop, on waking later and noticing the curious sight, to ask his friend at what time he expected the delegation of anarchists to arrive.

Having disposed of this problem to his partial satisfaction, the clerical gentleman concluded that his personal discomfort might be to some extent mitigated were he able to devise a protective covering for his head. Not being urgently pressed for time he betook himself to devising ways and means for the accomplishment of this purpose. Inspiration came to the rescue. A Chicago paper, fortunately saved, was impressed into service. The outcome was a giant cornucopia, carefully perforated for the use of eyes and nose, and which, when adjusted over its owner's head unquestionably aided in removing one horror from the scene, however much it may have been instrumental in adding another. About the time the ingenious gentleman had settled himself again to his unremunerative task as watchman in chief for the party, his companion came to life. The latter's eyes, which had opened gradually, closed with remarkable suddenness. Shortly a single eyelid lifted, to close again with the same unseemly haste. Then both were raised, and after blinking a bit, remained motionless; the result being a long, uninterrupted, wondering stare. Finally words:

"And he imagined he needed a flag to stop that train! Avast there, stranger! What council of the Mystic Brotherhood?—or is it an A B C class you think you're in? What land is this where dunces pass dire sentence on themselves?"

The grotesque figure turned around. "My friend, 'tis now well on to four o'clock. Hast bedding for the night? Thou dost—by the great Tom Walker's ghost, Bishop, the worst is on its way!" The chubby hand jerked off the paper hood, revealing a ruddy face, eloquent of despair. The one addressed, arose, scanned the horizon, walked slowly around the platform as he scrutinized the grass, and then approaching his friend, patted him gently on the head.

"It's all right now, brother. See? I've scared it away—it's gone."

Storey waved him off. "Since you've passed so much time considering the question of our escape from this predicament, you might explain how this signal of ours is going to work at night. I'm reasonably sure, these trains, when they move at all, travel in the dark of the moon." As he prepared to adjust his cap again, Bishop answered:

"I've decided that. You spend the balance of the day gathering dry grass. Then you sit in the middle of the track all night and burn it. Nothing simpler!" whereupon he picked up the French volume, thus intimating that argument was to be tabooed.

"Friend!"—the bugs were again at bay;—"for the elimination of the ego, and the utilization of the second person, singular, at opportune times, your aptitude is amazing. Might I suggest a slight deviation from the entirely unselfish order you've just issued?"

"You might."

"I mi—— Oh, Father in Heaven, grant me forbearance for a short time more! My idea is to stop the first eastbound train, and return to that mirage of a Junction. What form does your objection take? You'll naturally have one."

"Curiosity—first, to see how many times a year this train does run; and secondly, to see the kind of medal the company gives us. Then, besides, I'll need that twenty-seven cents as a sort of restoration fund. Candidly, Storey, if that train doesn't pass in an hour or two, I don't believe we'll see it until morning. These short roads usually haul their freight during the daytime, and we probably just missed connecting with the only bit of traveling equipment this particular one has got. The Northern Pacific couldn't afford to drop us here unless some kind of

service was in operation—that's certain. My judgment is that you sit out there and watch until something comes along."

With this partial lapse from a bantering mood which had aggravated even the tolerant Storey, he shifted his luggage, spread his rain coat carefully on the floor, extended himself thereon, and after registering a vow never to travel again without a tent, or at least an umbrella, returned to the courtship of Jacques and Eugenie. His ministerial friend, who manifested his feeling of relief at this display of recovered sanity, by a prolonged and audible sigh, resumed his post, dug an Episcopalian Hymnal out of his valise, and beginning with number one, undertook to initiate the insectile community into the melodies of that faith; an occupation that came to an early and abrupt halt by reason of the parched condition of his throat.

As the afternoon retreated in the face of dusk, the terrors of an all night vigil began shaping themselves into a tangible and formidable group. That is, so far as Storey was concerned. Had there been some spirit of impartiality shown by the conditions causing all his woe; had a few bugs now and then strayed toward his friend, where, by all the rules of logic—considering his recumbent attitude—they should have gone, humble resignation would have been a comparatively easy thing. But when every caterpillar, beetle, and hop-toad thereabouts, managed somehow to get in his immediate vicinity, and concentrated their fire upon him like so many flies around a full molasses jar, then patience dwindled down to *nil*. Bishop, at least, must straighten up and talk; whereupon the hymn book, now desecrated to the vengeful purposes of man, struck the meditating object of his spleen full abaft, thus precipitating a conversation which, if slightly caustic at the start, relieved the big man's mind, and settled eventually into a really serious groove.

To these voluntary exiles from the Babledom of eastern life, the gradually enveloping night, with its weird surroundings, its serene and starry sky, brought in time curious and sober thoughts. They ran from retrospect to anticipation, and tarried long about the man whom both had come to see; the man they loved and honored; the man they hoped to work with and perhaps obey; the man who had sacrificed to conscience every prospect

of material wealth, with its resultant pleasures; who had turned again to nature, trusting there, when final atonement should be done, to find the peace so long sought for in vain.

And so the night wore on. A welcome chilliness succeeded to the heat of day, until at last, despite the annoyance caused by those nocturnal wanderers whose interest in their Brobdingnagian visitors was yet alive, they passed from musings into sleep—sleep that brought to one of them at least, a wondrous vision verging close to Paradise.

A vision where quiet came and lingered in the soft light of a woman's eyes; where soothing melody was brought to life in the laughter from her lips; where a small, white cottage stood within a vale, with its modesty finding refuge under tender, clinging vines, and fragrant blossoms, and flowers—crimson, yellowish, and fair; where bare toed children played—with golden, unattended hair and curly locks; where tiny hands did funny pranks, and gleeful shouts, and strangely uttered words, and soon forgotten cries and sobs were heard; where lawns were like the emerald, and edged with roses, and where the scent of honeysuckles filled the air; where days were always bright with sunshine, and nights were lit with stars; where voices were attuned to love, and arms were waiting for the sweet embrace; where hands were willing, and ears could only hear the good of other men; where the whispering waters of the near-by brook—where the willows stood and sheltered them—murmured the saddest, sweetest truth in all the world, before they proved it in their long and tiresome journey to the sea.

Which of these two men, now wrapped in slumber on the silent plains, think you, will be the happier when coming dawn brings back the real?

CHAPTER II.

A sturdy individual drew taut the last reluctant rope of an Army tent, set invitingly in the shade of a half dozen thick leafed trees. The bared arms told of muscular strength, while behind the opened collar of his flannel shirt one now and then caught visions of a sun browned chest—covering for a healthy, vigorous pair of lungs. A woman stood beside him, toward whom, as she spoke, he turned two clear and honest eyes—eyes that peeped from above a dark, luxuriant beard, reminding one of placid lakes, seen at times through the foliage that guards their shores. The man was Anholt—the woman, Dorothy. Except in the richer coloring of the face and a slightly increased fullness of the figure, she appeared as when we saw her last, some fifteen months ago. Nor was this strange; for when faith and purity, forgiveness, love and hope, are rounded into a character such as hers, the countenance through life remains stamped with the Divine imprint, and neither time nor suffering, happiness nor pain, can modify or add one iota to the matchless beauty and perfection there disclosed. She was speaking now to Van, her husband.

"It was just too funny, dear; the way Mr. Storey tells it—and to think, if they'd only known, they could have walked it in an hour!"

"My dear girl! their entrance was spectacular enough as it was." Anholt had stepped back and now stood viewing his completed work with an air of pride. "Si Hawkins swears there wasn't a blessed scrap left in the brakeman's dinner pail by the time they got here, and I'll take oath they cleaned us out right afterward. I wonder," he added, "what's become of them anyhow! They've got to see those chickens, sure!"

"I do believe, dear"—a semblance of mischievousness lurked in the reply—"you think more of those old Leghorns than you do of your boy. I hope to goodness, no more will have the gaps, though!"

"I can second that hope," he returned, picking up his axe, preparatory to leaving for the house. "I mean about the gaps. I've stuffed a whole

strip of bacon and a pound of cayenne pepper down their throats already. About Stanley, though—of course I'll keep on fathering him, provided he stops using my shoes for glue pots." Then, as they turned toward the house. "I suppose Storey is tagging after Marie, eh?"

Dorothy delayed answering until they had reached the back porch steps. Then placing her hand on Anholt's arm, she said:

"Yes dear, he's with her—at the store. I do hope she'll listen to him, now that he's come so far!" For a minute she paused, as if endeavoring to decide some question presented suddenly to her mind; then looking inquiringly in her husband's eyes, she added: "Tell me, Van, do you think she will? You know she likes him so much."

Anholt patted her gently on the shoulder. "If she don't, little one, she's a goose. But then—she's a woman, too! so who can tell? I hope" —looking at the sky—"that cloud brings rain, or the balance of the crops may as well turn in their checks. I'm off to hunt that Bishop up! Wonder how he and Storey will take to sleeping in a tent!" with which concluding remark he started around the house toward the street.

Anholt's place, comprising some two hundred acres of fertile land, which he had purchased partly with cash, and partly by giving long time notes, stood just outside of the resident section of the little town of Red Hill, a place now of perhaps four hundred inhabitants. His house, a single storied architectural monstrosity of seven rooms, built of logs and rough timber, and still unpainted, was erected in that corner of his property nearest to the town, and directly facing a road, which as it approached the railroad siding, became the principal business street of the place. Red Hill boasted a grain elevator, a bank, a hotel, a weekly newspaper, two general stores, a drug store, a hardware store, a blacksmith shop, a livery stable and a dressmaking establishment; the last named institution, by the way, doing a remarkably thriving business, when the population of this particular community is taken into account. As yet there was neither church, town hall, nor anything like a satisfactory form of local government; this last omission marking a condition of affairs soon to be corrected. The surrounding territory, heretofore neglected by the farming

element, had, through an intelligent system of irrigation, been transformed into a productive, promising country, toward which the tide of immigration had recently been turned. The land to the east, north, and northwest of the town, showed everywhere the results of this influx of honest tillers of the soil. To the south and southwest, most of the region was owned or controlled by the Great Northern Road, and still remained undeveloped, barren and unpopulated. Anholt's farm lay directly west of Red Hill and had been the first cultivated piece of land in that neighborhood; its former owner, now dead, having been the pioneer settler in that section of the state. Himself a novice in all that pertained to the art of farming, Anholt had engaged the services of a practical, experienced man, under whose instruction he had gradually succeeded in acquiring a respectable knowledge of what and what not to do; the result being, that in this, his second season, he had harvested enough good wheat to enable him to cancel a large part of the mortgage held against his land, and to inspire him with reasonable hopes of eventually freeing himself of all other obligations. In this new phase of life his ready adaptability had stood him in good stead. His own personality, enabling him to form friendships at will, together with the lovable, unassuming disposition of his wife, had found them early welcome in the homes of the farmers and townspeople in that vicinity. Many of these new found friends learned in time to resort to him as a counselor in matters whose proper disposition required a deeper knowledge or a greater experience than they possessed; a confidence on their part, which, flattering as it was to him, involved a more or less departure from the policy he had so carefully mapped out. That a radical change in the man's temperament had been wrought by his present manner of life was unquestionable. He had, in most things, grown conservative to the extreme. If less aggressive, he was more firm. If less demonstrative in his affections and beliefs, he was more convincing in his quiet earnestness. More softened in his ways, more chastened in his thoughts, more scrupulous and conscientious in every act that might, even indirectly, affect the interests of his fellow men, he approached now more nearly to the ideal personified in Stanley Hope, than at any prior period of his life.

In one respect his mind and aspirations had remained unchanged. Or rather, let it be said, that conviction grew and thus emphasized the unalterable purpose of a Destiny that controlled his life. This was the belief that he would yet be called upon to teach the world a newer faith; that in his own deep sufferings he had found the seed of truth—the only truth that in the coming years could bring social unrest to a close. In this belief he worked and lived and dreamed. Because of it he found surcease from many bitter memories of darker times. It brought him occupation for the mind when manual toil was done; and thus with the flight of weeks and months his ideas became rounded into shape—into what he trusted would prove to be a practicable method insuring ultimate success. At times he wondered if his happiness would not be more secure if this conviction were less strong; if the present current of his life were to flow forever as it was; if he could live, and work, and die, content with matters as they stood. But after all that was but a selfish creed—a coward's part, and not that of a man. He must, of course, continue in his present way until he had purged himself of every debt. After that—well, it might or might not be too late.

Through correspondence he had kept in close touch with his friends. He knew that Bishop was free at last from all connection with his old pursuit; that he proposed in starting out anew to come and join him—Anholt—here. He knew that Storey, for reasons more or less obvious to those who read, would come along. He had heard from Stanley Hope, whose short but friendly messages were treasured like so many gems. He had learned that Professor Rosseau, somewhere in Canada or the West, was again working as a mining engineer, endeavoring to recoup himself for losses sustained in the guano deal. He was informed of the good work being done by the League and its members; of the finally undisputed supremacy of its progressive element, and of the gradual elimination of the Withers' faction's power. Now and then a letter came from some former protegé, telling of his fight and aims, and breathing gratitude. From Chicago, reports were had at intervals, advising him of the Schnelhauser Company's great success. Of Dubledieh, his whereabouts

or present occupation he knew nothing—could learn nothing. He had, with difficulty, ascertained that his own unfortunate history had been disclosed to the Directors of the English Board, but not, quite fortunately, until after the first dividend had been paid. What their impressions were of him now; whether he stood absolved or in their eyes was held in disrepute, he had not tried to learn. He considered that his action had been justified, and that, for the present must be enough. From Burgess, the artist, came every week some new thought or suggestion which he desired incorporated in Anholt's Utopian plan. He invariably asked when the experiment would begin, and respectfully suggested that he be given credit for his assistance, when publicity ensued. Once he gave an exhaustive resumé of his attempts to introduce what he termed the "prenatal" style of art, with the result, so he affirmed, that a commission in lunacy, comprised of members of his club, had prescribed a series of three big dinners —at his expense—as the sole hope of his restoration to a normal mental state.

David Eastman was here, although at present helping out on an adjoining farm. In his quiet way he continued to tell the story of his Christ, and Charity, and Love, to those who gave him opportunity.

Marie had joined them late in the preceding fall—she and her baby girl, then three years of age; a robust, dimpled, sweet faced tot, whose golden but rebellious hair and deep blue eyes, contrasted strangely with the brunette beauty of the one she called her "siste." "Siste"—Oh, what tragedy can hide its terrors in the shadow of a name—behind a short, endearing term like this!

Here was a mother—a queen of womankind, within whose veins the crimson, passionate blood of a southern ancestry still coursed; the child of a people who knew no obstacle—neither life nor virtue, honesty nor sin, in the pathway of their love or of their hate; who struck for vengeance with unerring, fatal aim; who gave no quarter—asked none, in the arena where men battled for the heart. Here was an empress of her sex, by all the rights of blood, and intellect, and worth, equipped to grace the court of courts—the home of some deserving, honest man—denied the right to

call her child her own; deprived—because of love for it—of sweet moments known alone to motherhood, when cherub lips first lisp the precious name that designates the rank of her whose breast they cling and cuddle to. Here was a brave, heroic soul, whose punishment was growing with the years; the features of whose little one quickened the memory of her sin and of him who led her on to shame. Here was a repentant sinner, in self-atonement sacrificing more than life, more than wealth, more than fame, or power, or the treasured love of man, waiving the one priceless privilege of maternity, and disclaiming parentage of her child, that it might encounter life with an honorable, unsullied name. Here was Marie, whose faith in Dorothy and Anholt was supreme, pledging forever this beloved innocent to their care; asking only that she might be near, and by her toil provide it food, and clothes, and toys, and help in some slight measure to insure its future happiness. And *men* believe they know of love, and sacrifice, and misery, and pain!

Thus did Eleanor Anholt, known to the neighbors merely as an adopted child, start the fourth year of her life. Thus was Anholt's family increased by two, for Marie, now sister to them all, was commanded by the lord and master of the house to take her place as fifth wheel in the family cart.

There were four things Red Hill sorely needed when Anholt first arrived. One was a store, where the women folks—the more exclusive ones, we mean—could purchase hats, and suits, and other female toggery, made up as they desired; a place the lack of which had taken many good, round dollars to Beaver Junction, which otherwise would have stayed at home. Then a church was needed—any kind—it didn't matter much; while to offset this, when once secured, the broader minded citizens argued that a lawyer should be found. Some held out for two, but the conservatives prevailed, contending that if a man knew the law at all, he could handle both sides quite as easily as he could manage one, and thus by dealing with them both, afford to make a big discount in fees. True, some sarcastic ne'er-do-well suggested also making him trial judge—he would understand the pros and cons of plaintiff and defendant both, and

then the cost, most naturally, would be lower to the town. This question served to press more firmly on their minds the fourth and final need—a complete, up-to-date and warranted form of municipal government. The best they could do at this just now was embodied in their possession of an aged, one legged rheumatic, who more by courtesy than by any recognized authority had been styled Chief Constable of the town. They were tired of seeing even stray dog cases tried at Beaver Junction. That place, mind you, was the county seat, and so far as its residents were concerned, the center of the universe; Red Hill—when they thought of it at all—being a mere way station "up the line." Because of this the Red Hill spirit writhed and squirmed. Its residents were sick of hearing "Beaver Junction this," and "Beaver Junction that," and proposed to own a "sure-enough, twenty-four carat town government" themselves, or know the reason why; a decision which the *Torch and Trumpet,* the sole newspaper of the place, having nothing else to talk about, took all of four successive weekly issues to elaborate upon, conscientiously forwarding its cleanest copies to the fifty foremost papers in the land.

In the first great need was found the opportunity of Marie, which promptly grasped, had proved no less a God-send to herself than to the women of Red Hill. She possessed that rare and subtle quality called tact, and with it a sound business judgment, some knowledge of the trade, and taste; a combination accounting fully for her recent leasing of a larger store.

As for the legal talent and the church, that, to Anholt, seemed a need designed by Providence for his particular benefit. Bishop might profess to be a little rusty at the law, and Storey kick considerably at preaching in the street, but of what real value are your friends if they shy at details such as these? He shuddered at the possibility of their expressing an inclination to labor on the farm. It was difficult enough to get the crops harvested as it was—why, therefore, should he incur the chances of a strike? And since they had disclosed their firm intention of coming on, whether it suited him or not, he felt in duty bound to make some provision for their time; the outcome being an extra edition of the

Torch and Trumpet, in which wood cuts of St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Tombs Prison stood in juxtaposition, as an illustration of what Red Hill was coming to.

And since these strides toward the dignity of a metropolitan estate were entirely due to the indefatigable efforts of their esteemed fellow townsman, Mr. Anholt, what more natural than the intimation, editorially expressed, that the town might go further and fare worse than by electing him first mayor of the municipality to be?

It looked indeed, as if the Anholt dynasty was booked for something more than dreams.

CHAPTER III.

Following a late supper on the day succeeding the arrival of Storey and Bishop, those two worthies, accompanied by Anholt, sought the comfort of certain rustic benches placed temptingly near the tent, which, for lack of room within the house, had been purchased and furnished for their especial use.

"That pipe," explained their host, after they had settled themselves, and indicating with a nod the one which Storey was cautiously turning over in his hands, "was carved by yours truly for this happy occasion out of the finest corncob that ever grew. Fellows, there was enough corn on that—hello! what now?" as the recipient of his gift, blowing on its stem, like an amateur musician on a clarinet, grew pop-eyed, red, and seemed threatened with an explosion of the cheeks. "I'm blessed if I didn't forget to clean that out. Anybody got a hat pin? Funny! Here, Nora—N-o-r-a!" as he caught sight of Eleanor scampering across the lawn. Turning she ran toward him with outstretched arms, to be received with a gentle hug and kiss.

"Go ask mama, dear, for her hat pin. Mr. Storey's blowing up. Hurry now!" and he clapped his hands as she, after first looking wonderingly at the big man, scurried away in the full belief that his life depended on her speed. Storey, who had been watching her, turned thoughtfully to the foster father.

"There is something about that little girl strangely appealing to me," he observed, slowly. "An indefinable expression in the eyes at times, reminding one of Miss Von Bonhorst. Have you ever noticed it?"

"My dear fellow," came the noncommittal reply, "Marie's eyes are dark. Storey here," he added, addressing Bishop, "has certainly got one woman on the brain. I think I can see our Utopia relegated to the dump."

"So far as that's concerned," said the smaller man, "everything is Marie. That wild-eyed mustang of yours is Marie. The bull terrior

is Marie. If he waked up some night beside a bed bug he'd say it remi——."

"My friends!"—the tone brought Bishop's comment to an abrupt close; "we'll let that subject drop. Suppose we take up matters that interest us all as soon"—here he took the hat pin from a dimpled hand—"as soon as I finish Anholt's work. In the meantime he might regale us with some more information about his crops"—a suggestion resulting in a prolonged and elaborate review of their host's experience on the farm, together with a statement of the pedigree, cost and virtues of every animal to be found thereon, all supplemented by a learned dissertation on the various diseases they were subject to. Doubtless he would be going still, had not the minister, finishing his pipe, interrupted his harangue with the remark:

"My friends, 'tis growing dark, and I would to thee a tale unfold. Would'st hear it, gentlemen?"

"I 'would'st,' " said Bishop.

"And I."

"Then mark ye well these words: There lived once upon a time in the city of New York, a famous gambler. The stench arising from his place of business reached the nostrils of every honest citizen, until in time, the boldest leagued together to rid the city of him and all his class. The leader of the crusaders was a minister, forceful, resourceful, brave. The campaign waged for months, but finally the righteous people won, and gambling was suppressed. Many of these vanquished thieves turned to politics. Among them he of whom I spoke. This new vocation suited him, like water suits a duck. He grew in wealth and power, until in time he held the city in his hands. Some years ago an extension to a city park was planned. This meant the purchase of adjoining land. Ten of the lots needed were owned by the minister I told you of. He believed the agent who approached him asking for his price to be a friend. He named a figure the land was worth. Through this man the sale was made, the lots transferred, and an affidavit signed by both the minister and his wife, in which the price they originally paid for the property was set forth. The agent

claimed this to be a protective measure taken by the city administration in anticipation of graft charges later being made. In the course of time the extension to the park was finished, the few mutterings about the prices paid to various owners ceased, and the agent of whom I spoke was killed in a brawl in some saloon. Municipal conditions went from bad to worse. The advocates of reform grew loud and a forced investigation of the city books was made. On the committee appointed for this task was a fledgling of the law, a son of the minister who years before had fought for civic cleanliness. To him and two associates was assigned the clearing up of smothered charges arising from the purchase of park lands. In this investigation the records covering the transaction with his father were scrutinized. Here, to his astonishment, the evidence of graft was clear. His own knowledge of the matter disclosed this at a glance. His father had paid eight thousand dollars for the lots, He had sold them for nine. The records gave the price paid by the city as fourteen thousand. His father's receipt verified the books. On top of this was an affidavit subscribed to by both parents alleging the cost to them had been thirteen thousand instead of eight. Against this of course would be found such partial evidence as the tax assessment books might disclose and the inference to be drawn through knowledge of the surrounding values. The original deed itself showed nothing, the consideration stated being a merely nominal one. But the testimony of the former owner was available. This would expose the truth, and brand the signers to the affidavit as perjurers. This man had been summoned, as had numbers of other former owners of titles to the purchased properties. The investigation was to be thorough; each case to be fully covered. As yet the young lawyer's parents were safe. In their case the public had evidenced no suspicion of irregularity. But as with every other transaction of like nature it must bear the test of scrutiny. His associates on the committee, from all that he could see, had given the matter no serious thought, handling it in a routine way, with neither apparent interest nor prejudice. When they were in possession of the contradictory evidence, however, they would be obliged

to act. Whatever was to be done, therefore, must be done at once. Here was graft, perjury, crime, with his parents, so far as the documents would show, the criminals. The agent was dead. No explanation could be had from him. The young attorney recalled a casual statement made by his father to the effect that all the papers had been signed in blank at the suggestion of the man now dead, the latter's explanation being that he was pressed for time and would fill them in at a later hour. He knew by that, who the actual criminal had been, where this difference of five thousand dollars had gone, and why the affidavit had been drawn. But proof was lacking, and to charge the crime to one now dead without evidence to support the charge, would tend to hurt, instead of help his parents' cause. Their salvation could be found only in an immediate cessation of probing into the case. There was one person who could stop it. The man his father had condemned and fought long years before. His god was wealth and he knew no sentiment. He undoubtedly could be bought. Such was the young man's argument. He used his influence to secure an interview, placed the matter bluntly before the city's boss, and asked his price. He was told to call again. Then he received his answer—in substance this: 'Your father is the only man who ever got the best of me. He's the only man I hate. He put me down and out, he thought. He called me the biggest scoundrel in New York; said he'd rather have his son a murderer than to have him live a life like mine. There was no term so vile he didn't hurl at me. I owe him something—now he'll get it. Here's my price. You'll equip the swellest gambling joint in town. You'll run it under your proper name, and run it yourself, mind you—not through substitutes. You'll pay for your protection like the rest have got to do. You do this and I'll see that you're not closed up. You'll turn all or part of your profits back to me. When you've paid me say, two hundred thousand plunks, you quit, but you've got to make that money at the game. I'll see you do it. That's my price. You pay it or the old folks go to jail.' The young man agreed. One year later his father died, doubtless of a broken heart, but honored. The mother lives, and now is happy. Eighteen months ago the young

man went to France, saw the boss, there on his vacation, and paid the last cent of the debt. Two weeks later he sought his former fiancé. She was in a convent. He turned to his mother and spent a year in close attendance by her side. Now he's here. That's the story, gentlemen."

For this revelation of Bishop's tragic past, uttered in the calmest, most dispassionate of tones, Storey had chosen a fitting time. Night was in the ascendant. All was shadow. No faces to read, no eyes to fathom, no emotions brought to view. Above the rustling leaves the stars now shone, but no light from them had penetrated here. There, where Anholt sat, the glowing ashes in his pipe, now red, now white, by rapid turns, alone gave hint of some disturbance in his brain. From Bishop neither sound nor signal. He was listening for his friend's comments.

Storey, having finished, filled his pipe. Then, for an instant, as the match struck fire, a tableau—a fleeting study where attitudes were eloquent of passions in restraint. Anholt was leaning forward, with chin imbedded in the hollow of one hand; the other, clenched, was resting on his knee. His face was rigid; his eyes glistened; his teeth sunk in the pipe-stem like the jaws of a remorseless vise.

Bishop was standing—standing as he did that night when Anholt first had realized the other's mastery of men—imperious, inscrutable, fearless; possessor of an adamantine will that brooked no opposition; of a loyalty in friendship inviolable till death. Thus he stood, with gaze fixed straight ahead, the same unreadable character as of yore.

The light had vanished. Silence still prevailed. Finally Anholt spoke:

"The incriminating affidavit—what became of it?"

"Destroyed," Bishop answered.

"Did this—this boss—had he a hand in the deal, do you suppose?"

"He planned it. That's why—afterwards—he saw that I was made one of the committeemen."

"So! You were to be made your parents' executioner! What made him wait so long, though?"

"The agent had to die, or disappear. You understand?"

"I do."

Again quiet. Bishop was heard to resume his seat. The laughter of children ready for their beds rang out upon the night. Somewhere a horse neighed. Then, way yonder, in the east, the moon crept cautiously into sight.

"Bishop!" exclaimed Anholt, impelled to speak again; "words aren't worth a picayune to a man at such a time as this. You know how I feel, and what I think, and that's worth more than all the blubbering sympathy in the world. Before we drop the subject, though, I'd like to know why I wasn't in on this long ago."

"Because, my friend," said Storey, answering in the other's stead; "when his father learned that Stanley Hope and I both knew, he secured the promise of our brother here, to tell nobody else until his contract had been fulfilled. His father, Anholt, would have fought the charge himself, and wanted to, despite the knowledge that he must inevitably lose. But there was Mrs. Bishop, an invalid, who would be sacrificed, and his son who had already bound himself, was obdurate. I mention this in justice to the father of our friend."

"All of this," observed Anholt, "only makes me more cock sure that no wrong has ever yet been done that somebody hasn't suffered for. If it isn't the guilty, it's the innocent. It's a devilish funny kind of law, it seems to me. Anyhow"—pounding the ashes from his pipe and standing up—"I suppose it can't be helped!" adding, as he shoved his tobacco pouch in Storey's hand, "I'm off for a lantern. I want to give you fellows a piece of news before we join the women. It sounds pretty good to me."

In ten minutes he was back, a pitcher of lemonade in one hand, a lantern in the other. Placing the latter on the ground before them he ventured the opinion that if Bishop wanted a drink at all he'd "best get busy quick;" a reflection on Storey's inordinate capacity that caused the minister to promptly withdraw his hands.

"Just imagine, fellows, that you're down at Nowhere when you go after this. Think of that dry and torrid——."

"That'll do, my friend; I'm ready to swallow the pitcher now. What's Bishop waiting for?" as the object of his inquiry, holding the vessel in both hands, looked curiously around. "I suppose he wants a glass and serviette. Will somebody kindly press the button?"—a crude bit of sarcasm which secured him speedy possession of the coveted liquid prize.

"You notice how cold that water is?" asked Anholt. "Well, that's from the coolest, dandiest spring west of the Mississippi. You don't need ice with that any more than Bishop needed a cut glass cup. I've got a jug of cider sunk——."

"What!" spurted Storey, lowering the pitcher and nearly choking in the pleasurable excitement induced by this happy bit of news.

"I said," repeated his host, "that I've got a jug of cider sunk in the water of that spring, that's made from the juiciest, biggest, and reddest apples that ever ripened in the sunshine. We'll toast the women folks with it when we go in."

"Verily, my friend"—the plump cheeks were again in hiding behind the polished glass—"this is a country where superlatives run wild."

Anholt, reclaiming his tobacco pouch, disregarded this verbal attack on his enthusiasm, and having completed all the formalities necessary to the proper enjoyment of a smoke, divulged the promised news between occasional puffs.

"You fellows remember that guano deal? Well, you'll recall then, that when I supposed that Rosseau was trying to throw me down, I gobbled the privileges up myself with a line of options. I've sweat blood half a dozen times since, in raising the money to keep them alive. I've still got 'em. Well, who should write me a month ago but the Continental Phosphate and Fertilizer people, wanting to know if I'd sell out. I answered 'yes—what'll you pay—when?' They replied—the letter came today—'a hundred thousand if closed quick.' Is the synopsis intelligible, so far, gentlemen?" Both men nodded affirmatively. "Well, what do you think I'm going to do about it, eh?" looking alternately from one to the other.

"I wilt!" said Bishop.

"And you, Storey?"

"My friend, the man who wrote about the ways of Providence being inscrutable, had never heard of you. Will it be a home for orphaned infants, or a three-ringed circus—admission free?"

"What I'm going to do," said Anholt, after he had thoroughly digested the profound reply, "is this: I'm going over to the Junction tomorrow, since Bishop hasn't any notary papers yet, and execute a power of attorney to Rosseau, giving him power to close those negotiations for me, receipt for the money, and reimburse himself and all the rest. Maybe that'll help to square me a little bit in his eyes and theirs. And I want to tell you now that I believe Rosseau was doing all along what he thought was for the best interest of the company, regardless of how he went about it. I don't know where to reach him now, so I'll write Cunningham explaining matters and let him fire the Professor's letter on to him, wherever he is. If there's any money left over, they can keep it as interest. How does that strike you, fellows?"

"It's a characteristic decision, Anholt," said Storey, gravely. "The more so, since the obligation is a moral and not a legal one. It reflects your inherent tendency to sentiment in business affairs—a quality that you can afford to exercise now, in view of your present manner of living, where it only brought you misfortune before. It's a creditable and eminently proper step to take, my friend, and therefore one that I—and Bishop would have expected of you."

"Storey's right," affirmed Bishop, who had extended himself comfortably on the bench; "only he should have called your attention to the fact that now you're following sentiment in the right direction. When you do that it don't hurt—anytime or anywhere. It looks to me, Anholt, as if, by the time Storey reaches that inheritance we'll both have our faces washed. How long yet, brother?" turning to the minister.

"In eighteen months, gentlemen, I shall be prepared to finance our experiment. In the meantime——."

"In the meantime," interrupted Anholt; "love and religion are going to run horse and horse, and Blackstone will have a local representa-

tive. About eighteen months of this and we'll have population enough —I mean we can start proceedings with our own families, eh Storey?"

The reply was an earnest and soft "Amen!"

"As a matter of fact, fellows," persisted the pioneer Red Hillian of the three, "we've got enough work cut out to occupy that time. We don't even know where we're going to open fire."

"That's simple," said Bishop. "From what that fellow—what's his name—Jack Stahl?—told me, you'll be mayor of this burg. We'll let you practice the idea here. Maybe they'll take to it."

"And maybe they won't," was the retort. "The first thing we're going to do when we break loose, will be to hike off and hide our faces. If we can get off the earth, all the better. Then we'll cut communications until——."

"Until we wake up," suggested Bishop.

"Or until," said Storey, "fraternal strife shall make a cipher of our population."

"If you two consistent altruists must indulge in tomfoolery, go at it right. You'll find the ladies on the porch," and not to be outdone in folly, Anholt undertook to lead the way.

CHAPTER IV.

With the advent of Storey and Bishop, the ambitious Red Hillians, long restive under conditions necessitating their playing second fiddle to Beaver Junction, girded up their loins; sniffed the breeze like warriors ready for the fray; held indignation meetings nightly in front of Joe Fisher's store; passed resolutions by the score for the guidance of the state legislature, which, during its next session at Bismark would take up the matter of Red Hill's charter, and with rank heresy discussed electric lighting and street railway franchises; rate of interest on their first flotation of city bonds, and settled profound questions of municipal government in general, to the exclusion of crops, weather, and inside information concerning the domestic affairs of the neighborhood.

Every male adult in the community, in furtherance of his determination to keep abreast the times, searched industriously for some excuse to go to law, which interpreted, meant a friendly visit to the office of the Honorable S. R. Bishop, whose disinclination to insist on fees materially facilitated their efforts to discover some plausible pretext for the call. True, had each of these unruffled clients made a microscopic examination of his brain immediately after the invariably satisfactory consultation, he might have detected the germ of an opinion harboring there, in which the names, "Anson Van Anholt" and "mayoralty" were strangely hyphenated. Whether he could have traced the origin of this embryonic thought to his adviser's lips or not, remains an entirely different proposition. Certain it is, that no encouragement to its growth was discoverable in anything that Anholt had ever been heard to say, unless his "no" was to be construed as yes, and his "yes" as no.

Perhaps the greatest cause of Red Hill's inflated pride lay in its possession of a minister whose fame had spread across the country, and whose sermons were being printed in every paper from Fargo west to

Butte. Nor was its self-complacency lessened any by the occasional arrival of church delegations from Bismark, Glendive, and even Beaver Junction, with alluring inducements to the town's religious head to affiliate himself with the sacred cause in their respective communities; an invitation always declined, to the great delectation of Red Hill, and sure to be followed by a decrease in the population of some prominent townsman's chicken yard.

In fact, All Men's Church, as Storey, who had erected it at his own expense, insisted on calling it, was rapidly becoming a household word in the country for miles around, while the cavalcades of buggies, wagons, and saddle horses, all carrying their loads of uncomfortably dressed, but honest workers of the soil, filed on Sundays along the roads converging near the railroad crossing, like processions seen along the rural routes back East on circus day. There was little of the conventional about the church itself—a long, low structure, in which perhaps five hundred persons could seat themselves on benches quite devoid of backs, and at the farthest end of which was raised a platform, holding ordinarily a single chair and stand. In front, and on either side of the building, extended a wide, protected porch, where benches and tables, roughly made, were placed about at random—a wise provision for the country folks, who used it after morning service as a place whereon to spread their lunches and to discuss the crops with friends. Outside, the structure was rough, unpainted and uninviting. The interior showed evidence of some expense and taste. The ceiling was beamed; the walls—except the end where the platform stood—were neatly finished in some hard wood. The exception—the rear wall—had first been plastered, then covered with pure white paint; while around its edges—top, bottom and sides—ran a crimson band of color, twelve inches broad. In gilt letters, near the ceiling, were these words:

"IN LIFE WITH MEN. IN DEATH WITH GOD."

Directly under them, in smaller letters, was added:

"LET US FIND PATIENCE IN THIS THOUGHT."

On the floor, to the extreme right of the platform, stood a small organ, usually played during services by Dorothy or Marie. The seats, though lacking much in comfort, were well made and finished in a rich mahogany color. Three chandeliers—one directly over the platform—and a number of oil lamps, ranged on brackets around the walls, provided ample light for night meetings. A dozen windows—set high, owing to the porch outside—did similar duty during the day. Two huge stoves near the entrance furnished heat. There was no belfry; a near-by tree, rigged out with bell and rope, serving the purpose quite as well. The building, facing east, was situated on a short side street, just off the main road running from Anholt's farm to the business centre of the town. For a thorough understanding of incidents to come, these details should be carefully fixed in mind.

The sermons, as little orthodox as the structure itself, were equally well-fitted to the people, the conditions, and the time. Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile, believer or atheist, it mattered not; in this church all met on neutral ground. There was but one religion taught; on that each could understand and profit by, without conflicting with the doctrines of his or her accepted faith—the helpful, universal truth of man's brotherhood to man.

In his labors the minister found an invaluable assistant in David Eastman, and no inconsiderable portion of his time was devoted to preparing that young enthusiast for carrying on the work, when he, in accordance with his understanding with Bishop and Anholt, would be obliged to give it up. Anholt, who had first suggested the succession, united with Storey in this interesting educational task, confining himself, however—as he expressed it, "to the strictly secular end." As for the lad himself—if truth were told—he found the ointment not without its proverbial fly; that particular disturbing factor in this case being the inevitable separation from Anholt which the present arrangement implied; a separation, to avoid which, he had relinquished his Salvation Army work, and joined the other here. He had, however, long since learned to subordinate his personal desires to the welfare of the cause to which he had attached himself, and the arguments

advanced by his friends were so obviously intended not alone for his own benefit, but for that of the community around, that acquiescence appeared imperative.

The unexpected offer to Anholt for his options on the guano rights, had placed him in position where he would be free to co-operate with his two associates in their long planned experiment, when Storey said the word. In the meantime, as he had prophesied, there was ample to do in the way of preparation; so much so, indeed, that it encroached considerably both on the church work of Storey and the law practice of Bishop. However, as their present occupations were—to use the words of the legal gentleman—"but temporary expedients for killing time, and thereby easing Anholt's mind," the intrusion was welcomed, rather than otherwise, and eventually resulted in a practical unanimity of opinion being reached on hitherto debated points. An extension of three rooms had been built to Anholt's house for the use of his friends. The largest of these rooms had been converted into a study, and here the pros and cons were thrashed out, revisions made, and sheets of foolscap scribbled on, until in time one might have imagined their colony under way and this the government record room.

Thus at the expiration of nine months from the date marking the reunion of Anholt with his friends, we can discern a calm and settled condition of affairs, which in the lives of two at least, might be compared to the spell wrought by a soothing opiate after the mental stress of a stormy and havoc-making day. And yet, before another year had passed, all of this would be a memory—be sacrificed in deference to convictions which, when announced, must subject their owners to public ridicule and sneers.

To Anholt, one phase only of the present situation, caused more or less annoyance. The state legislature, during the winter, had voted a municipal charter to Red Hill, whereupon the delighted residents of that place had appointed a committee of the town's best rated business men and ordered them to proceed to Anholt's farm forthwith, and there advise its owner to prepare to act as first mayor of Red Hill, whether the idea suited him or not. The idea didn't suit him

and he quickly told them so, repeating the information so many times in the next few weeks, that a few of the more conservative felt half inclined to take him at his word. But the majority agreed to draft him anyhow, and proposed to make his election so rousingly unanimous that a refusal then to serve would amount practically to gross discourtesy, both to his friends and to the community at large. Yes, he had notified them of his probable departure from their country within the year, but since so many unforseen events can happen in that time they would assume the risk—besides, he could get things started properly at least. As for Bishop—he was needed where he was. Who would argue and distort the law before "His Honor," if the Mayor himself was the only legal luminary in the place?

One of the older citizens? Well, they were all too busy, or—let it be whispered—wise enough to know their own shortcomings, as indeed, they were informed on those of everybody else; a sufficient reason why, unless Anholt would consent to run, this first election would probably play "high jinks" with the social structure of Red Hill.

In the unwilling young man's household, opinions differed as to the proper course for him to take. Dorothy and Marie, longing for a continuance of the present quietude, fervently opposed all suggestions looking to his acceptance of the proffered honor. Storey remained neutral, while Bishop insisted that his friend's duty lay in subjugating his personal inclinations to the desire of a community so avowably and entirely friendly to him. So far as the farm was concerned, he contended, the other's official duties would not prevent his exercising a watchful eye over it. David Eastman, always frank and courageous when he believed his conclusions right, said he thought that "Mr. Anholt ought to stand for election, but that he should, in fairness, tell the voters first about his trouble;" a bit of advice which appealed more favorably to the one directly interested, than to the other members of the family group.

"Davey's right about that," he remarked to Bishop one evening when the matter was under discussion. If it wasn't that I don't want

the office and won't have it, I'd tell them quick what kind of a candidate they wanted to foist upon themselves. I'll work for nobody, city or individual, unless they know who they're employing, and that's flat. It would simply be a repetition of the gear affair, if I didn't. I'd keep my mouth shut, let my friends entrust their interests to my keeping, and then risk exposure that would make them look like a lot of suckers to every town around. It isn't a square game, Bishop, and I won't play it!"

"Is the gear company a success?" inquired his listener, meaningly.

"Yes, because fortunately the sword didn't drop until after the first dividend had been paid. That didn't make my part any cleaner though. Look back at the guano deal. Professor Rosseau and the rest had good cause for feeling sore. After their money was gone they awoke to the fact that they'd been in partnership with a reformatory graduate."

"And they're in clover now," commented Bishop.

"Why? Because a miracle occurred. Do you think that pays Rosseau for his loss of business; for the year he spent in the Canadian woods, away from his family—half frozen, half starved, and on a meagre salary; all because he had confidence in me? Suppose that report about the guano being no good was faked. I don't say—I don't believe yet that he did it; but suppose he did—suppose he wrote those letters to Chicago—another thing I'm doubtful about; what started it all but this cursed idea of trying to hide a repellant canker under a thin gauze of righteousness, to be shown up the first time you strike the light of day? It may be all right, so long as you live to yourself, and confine yourself to your personal affairs—I hope it is! But when you touch your neighbor's interests he's entitled to know what you are and what you've been. If not, it's a case of pretense, pretense, pretense; evading here, misrepresenting there, and all to hide a smaller error somewhere else. You're dishonest with yourself, dishonest with your friends, and dishonest with everybody else, every time you try it. I thank God, Bishop, that when our little colony is

born, our records will stand there in black and white for every man to read!"

"Anholt," said Bishop, as his friend picked up a book; "as a millennialist you exude a line of refulgent argument that makes mere mortals sit up and listen. As a practicalist your talk is about the most somniferous I've ever run across. Since the job would die of senility before the ordinary candidate could get all of his mistakes lined up, you ought to establish a minimum grade of offense at which the confession starts. Where are you going to put it—housebreaking, pinochle or matrimony? Will you confine it to legal or moral crimes, or both? To those discovered, or the hidden ones as well? Honest diaries from childhood up; the entire country a confessional; each inhabitant confessor as well as confessionalist, and every employer putting padlocks on the inkstands! I renig! I vote the Nobel prize for peace to the fellow who said 'ignorance is bliss—at times!'"

"Well," retorted Anholt, "I'm not going to be Mayor."

"I think you will," and supreme confidence was discernible in Bishop's voice.

CHAPTER V.

Near the southern limit of the Anholt farm and at a point furthest from the road, was a ridge of land, semi-circular in shape and some three hundred feet in length. Standing on its summit one looked down upon a half enclosed area of carefully trimmed and velvety grass, while off to the southwest—through the opening caused by the break in elevation—lay a vista of nature yet untouched; a gentle rise and fall of shadeless plains, furnishing the horizon for a setting sun. In the exact center of this natural playground, formed by the partially encompassing protuberant earth, stood a solitary, spreading maple tree, planted by the pioneer owner of the place, and now in the full vigor of its maturity. On the sward covered ridge a half dozen clumps of shrubbery grew, while seats, roughly improvised, provided in the warmer months an alluring resting place for those who chanced to pass that way. Here, in the early evenings of the preceding summer, the Anholt household had been wont to congregate, musing or talking as the spirit willed, while eyes followed the movements of merry children romping on the grass below. The place had been endowed by its owner with a name—The Lovers' Roost—which appellation grew in appropriativeness as the family group increased. Idealism could conjure up no more enchanting spot wherein betrothals might be wrought, or plights be sealed in the pressing of sweet lips to lips.

Here, in the late afternoon of an April Sabbath—the Sunday immediately prior to Red Hill's first municipal election day—Marie and Storey, lost in reflections bearing on the greatest issues of their respective lives, sat gazing silently upon the tranquil, peace compelling view; captives both to sacred thoughts—thoughts touching on the universal theme, and yet withal, so hopelessly divergent that neither for a time had dared to give them utterance. When finally the woman spoke, the trend of her meditation seemed partially disclosed. She appeared now to be communing with herself—soliloquizing, rather than speaking for the other's ears:

"To sleep—forever—in this abode of peace! To rest there—where the maple stands; where Eleanor and Stanley play; with their laughter as my requiem—their tribute to my memory, wild flowers—plucked by them and strewn across the grave! I wish—I wish somehow it could be so!"

Before she ceased a strong man's hand had taken possession of her own, and held it—held it in a grasp as gentle as his words; as tender as the love light shining in his eyes.

"My dear Marie! I wish that you could understand how much I grieve—how much my heart is aching in its love and sympathy for you. Can't you—won't you, let me share your sorrow to its full? It's so little—such a little favor compared to what I hunger for. Is it—tell me please, Marie—is it too much to ask?"

The dark eyes looked appealingly in his. There was a faint but unsuccessful effort to withdraw the hand. The voice was unsteady, tremulous:

"I'm sorry, Mr.—— Melville! I don't know why I talked like that. You mustn't—really, think I suffer, and with so many friends! Why—how could I? You see, I—I guess I'm too—too sentimental. I ——."

"My noble woman, you *are* suffering—stifling an outburst of feeling due to some terrible anguish of your mind. Oh! brave soul—Marie! Am I not worthy of your confidence? And—look upon me, dear! Am I not big enough and strong enough to act as burden bearer for us both? See! dear heart, the eventide draws near, and soon men's passions, sorrows, struggles, will vanish in forgetfulness. Look! Marie—Look! my princess; the setting sun is waiting—tarrying, for the joyous message from your lips—for the signal of triumphant love; prepared to gather up the past, with all of its unutterable woes, and with them sink beyond the ken and care of those whose respect and comradeship we crave. Won't you breathe that precious message now—in just one single, blessed word? Marie! Beloved! my will surrenders to my love for you. I violate the promise made you, dear—the sacred gift—don't you understand? I want it—want you—need you—forever, as my own!"

The massive fingers had taken firmer hold upon the woman's warm, ungloved hand. She had turned beseechingly to him—started to interrupt; then paused and waited patiently until he was done. When she answered every word and gesture told of the futility of his plea. It was not the woman of an hour since; not the woman of yesterday who spoke, but the Marie of months—aye, of years ago. She who had answered sentiment with facts, and championed Anholt's cause, while *he,* and Hope, and all the rest were glossing over the unpleasant truths with a veneer of confidence, neither helpful nor at times deserved. And yet in every phrase her voice proclaimed her appreciation of the sacrifice she made.

"Your words are cruel, Melville. And you promised me so faithfully, never, never to ask me that again. Perhaps the setting sun does sometimes bring quietude, but darkness follows too, and brings its many horrors to uneasy, hopeless minds. The sun you speak of grins sardonically at what it leaves behind, instead of acting as a scavenger for you, or I, or those who dread the night. I *do* suffer! Why should I deny it? but my relief, dear Melville, is not to come through you, nor yet through yon low, descending orb. Oh! understand me please. I *do* respect you. I admire and—I like you. You are so manly, so good, so gentle and true! If I were so—if I *could* marry you, believe me, I would have answered yes, and proudly—long ago. If in telling you my troubles, I could make your disappointment lighter, I would do so gladly. But don't you see"—her free hand was placed impulsively on his—"you couldn't help me if I did, and it would be harder—Oh! impossible, for us to live near one another then. Let us continue as we are—good, loyal friends! Besides, you have your own great work mapped out. A wife, just now, would be a hindrance rather than a gain."

"Do you believe Anholt thinks so?" asked Storey, the gloom deepening on his face.

"Oh, but he has Dorothy!"

"And I would have Marie."

"But Dorothy, don't you understand? is so different—so entirely different from others of our sex."

"I recognize all that, and next to you I consider her the dearest, sweetest little—."

"Oh! but she's more even than you appear to think. Don't you realize what a power for good she is in Mr. Anholt's life, and mine, and—yours, and all the rest? Don't you know that she's the strongest woman, I do believe, in all the world? She's like the patient and forgiving Christ—so firm and yet so gentle. She's like a beacon that never wavers, regardless of the storms, or calms, or seas—marking the one spot where safety always lies. I couldn't be like that—you see, I'm too changeable."

With this enthusiastic panegyric of her friend, her countenance took on the faintest semblance of a smile; a change unnoticed by the man who continued staring at the ruddy, western sky.

"You possess all of Dorothy's virtues," he managed to reply at last, "and one of Anholt's faults. Like him you will hide and cherish some inconsequential trouble of a generation past, to the ruination not only of your own life, but of mine as well." The woman made an attempt to withdraw her hand, the result being that Storey, holding it closer than before, turned and looked her in the eyes.

"Marie, dear," he said; "nothing that has ever happened in your life could alter this unconquerable love of mine for you. If you have assumed the burden of another's sins; if you yourself, perchance have erred; if you've been wronged—I care not what the trouble is, I want you, beloved. Do you understand? I want you—want you, in spite of all that was or is. I shall want you always, regardless of anything that ever, ever comes. I want you, and by the right of this consuming love; by the right of an honest manhood—despite your 'noes' repeated for the thousandth time, I propose to claim you as my wife. You love me—I know it—can see it in your eyes—feel it in your trembling hand. Am I—a man—a servant of the living Christ, to permit false pride, or prejudice, or some hypocritical conceit, to blockade the pathway of my love, while my queen, my beloved bride to be, stands just beyond—unprotected, heart-sore and alone? Am I, a preacher of Divine forgiveness, to lose the richest jewel tendered me, as I believe, by the hand of God himself, because a powerful microscope might, perhaps, reveal an infinitesimal flaw? Our troth, do

you understand, is pledged right here! You, Marie—my suffering, blessed child, are mine—mine now, tomorrow, for all the time to come. Oh! Father, keep us safely from this day forward in the shelter of Thy loving arms! Marie—Marie—Marie!"

Lower, tenderer grew the voice. Slowly the fair, soft hand was raised to receive the strange betrothal kiss—and then—the woman—the tears—the sobs—the quivering frame—the broken words:

"I—Oh! I cannot. I do—I love you, but—Oh! Melville, dear, it can—can never, never be. Oh! dearest, generous Melville—I—."

A huge hand, clumsy at the—to it—novel and unprecedented act, touched her arm—her shoulder—and then, encouraged by the unresisting attitude, stole gradually around her waist.

"There, there, child! try not to think about it for a while. We'll keep it dear, just as a little secret between ourselves. Please," as she undertook to speak, "please don't! Let us say nothing more about it now."

Thus they sat and thought—and thought, and then as the last red streaks faded from the sky, they started in silence for the house. Once there, Marie, pleading a severe headache, went directly to her room. Neither she nor Dorothy attended services that night. As for Storey, his last words before retiring, were addressed in confidence to Anholt.

"My friend, Marie has told me nothing, but if I can read the signs aright, a certain little girl will find another, if not a better dad."

A remark clearly refuting the calumnious charge that women alone divulge great secrets, and illustrating, by the way, the natural propensity of man to count his chickens before the shells are cracked.

CHAPTER VI.

A PUBLIC MEETING
will be held at
ALL MEN'S CHURCH
at 8 o'clock tonight.

MR. ANSON VAN ANHOLT,
who has declined to stand as a candidate for Mayor at tomorrow's election of City Officials, will disclose the reasons compelling his refusal of the proffered honor.

All Citizens Are Requested To Attend.

The above notice, in the form of a huge poster conspicuously displayed in front of the *Torch and Trumpet* office, had set Red Hill agog. The town was now in the throes of a new experience, ripe for excitement, and nervous with pleasurable anticipations of an election day that would establish her as the peer of her hated rival down the road. And here was an added—an unexpected attraction; a preliminary, whetting her curiosity, and promising a free for all, exhilarating treat.

Notwithstanding the poster, the consensus of opinion among the leading citizens remained the same. They would hear Anholt, and then compel him to accept the office, whether he wanted to or not. Somebody suggested engaging the town band for the occasion, an enthusiastic undertaking promptly blocked by Anholt who heard of it, and who informed Reese Goodwin, the local editor, that if any music was to be placed upon the program, it should be in the way of a funeral dirge and not a wedding

march; on hearing which, the thermometer of public interest took another and heart racking upward spurt.

On the Anholt farm, the day to all appearances was similar to those preceding it, except that its owner, instead of laboring in the fields, seemed, with singular indifference to the sprouting crops, disposed to take his ease about the house, now playing with the children, and now cleaning and adjusting with wonder inspiring care, the parts to a recently purchased graphophone; an instrument which, so he claimed, "knocked the kinks out of any other in the west."

Early in the day he had made his customary journey to the postoffice, still situated in Joe Fisher's store; returning with a strange, inexplicable gleam noticeable in his eyes, and with its cause securely stowed away in an inside pocket of his coat. At noon, Storey, with an air of suppressed excitement came hurriedly to the house, motioned mysteriously for his friend—seated on the porch—to join him in their study, and behaved in general like some schoolboy nursing a stolen pear, which he proposed dividing with his nearest chum.

"All right!" said Anholt, who having obeyed the summons, now reclined unconcernedly in a chair, "let's have it!"

"My friend," replied the minister who remained standing, "there's trouble brewing some place. Look at this!" He passed a yellow paper—a telegram—to the other's hand. "I called on Mother Grote this morning and found this on my return, at Bishop's office."

"How is the poor old body?" inquired the seated man, glancing uninterestedly at the message. "It's an awful thing for an old woman like her to be alone, don't you think?"

"She's improving. Marie, you know, is attending to her wants. But" —he stepped forward impatiently—"about that telegram! Mother Grote can wait. This can't. Will you do me the courtesy of reading it?"

"I *have* read it, Storey, but find nothing alarming. Merely a request from Cal Littleton to use the church tonight."

"And," supplemented his companion, "to discuss an important matter bearing on tomorrow's election. Is there nothing in that to cause appre-

hension, considering that this Littleton is the most unscrupulous lawyer in Beaver Junction?"

Anholt handed the telegram back. "If I mistake not," he said, "he was a member of the legislative committee that passed upon the Red Hill charter. Doubtless there is some legal point he desires explaining, to insure a valid election. Isn't that reasonable to suppose?"

"See here, my friend!" replied Storey, now resorting to a seat; "Marie has had a presentiment, and so have I, that tonight's developments will exceed in unpleasantness anything you've figured on. I am convinced, absolutely, that your danger is connected with this request," —tapping the message in his fingers. "I intend to wire a decided 'no' immediately. Your engagement of the church will be a sufficient reason."

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Anholt. "My dear fellow," he added, arising and placing his hand affectionately on his friend's shoulder; "I want you to encourage him to come. He will arrive on the eight o'clock train, undoubtedly, and I will delay my talk until he reaches the meeting. Believe me, old chap, there is no favor in all the world that you could grant me now, so great as this. And today, you know, is my day! It spells liberty, and I'm going to use Littleton himself, to break the shackles off. Just keep those words in mind! Send the answer quick—get him here. That's all I want."

"Well!" exclaimed Storey, starting to obey, "I'll do it, and may the good Lord protect and help you! It seems *I* can't!"

"Take it easy!" was the response, as the two walked to the door. "Besides, he'd come anyhow—I'll wager that!"

As the minister, for once devoid of appetite for dinner, turned his steps toward the town, Anholt called for Dorothy, and reentering the study, resumed his seat. A moment later, and the air, so recently surcharged with oppressive portents of impending evil, seemed clarified as if by magic touch—as if some unseen influence had wafted there the purity and sweetness of budding trees and scented blossoms embellishing the lawn outside.

"Did you call, dearest?"

"Yes, sweetheart! Come—will you please, and sit with me!" As his arm encircled her fragile waist, and his head bowed low to kiss the hand that so often had caressed and soothed his aching brow, he felt that it was good to live—that it was well to suffer, to toil, to sacrifice material things, so long as she—this precious emissary from above, was here to strengthen and enlighten him.

"Do you know, little one," he said at length as he drew her cheek closer, closer to his own, "I think perhaps I'll bring a visitor home tonight, after the—the explanation. Can you arrange to find room somehow, if I do?"

She drew her head away and eyed him wonderingly. "Why, yes, dear! I could manage it, but who—who in the world is it, Van?"

"Now, now, dearie! you're almost like an ordinary woman when that little bee of curiosity begins to buzz. But there! it's someone we knew back East, and I'm afraid he'll be—well, perhaps not feeling in tip top shape when he arrives."

"But Van, I do think you ought to tell me. It's not nice in you to keep it back—now is it, dear?" Here she looked at him so pleadingly that his determination for a moment wavered. "And then too," she continued, "if he's sick he must have our room, and we—Oh, Van!"—clapping her hands—"we can fix up the tent again. Will you? Oh! won't that just be fine?" Her enthusiasm was contagious, and he felt half inclined to begin the task at once. But there was a certain dread reality calling to him now; one that encouraged early flight of lighter, happier thoughts.

"I'll relieve your mind later, dearest. It's just a little hint I received in a letter from Mr. Cunningham; so you see I'm not quite sure myself. But tomorrow, if he don't show up—no, not Mr. Cunningham!—I'll tell you who it is. And by the way, Professor Rosseau wrote me too; says he's doing fine again, and insists that we must visit him when we reach New York—if we ever do. Isn't that startling news?"

"Isn't it good and satisfying news, dear?" she corrected.

"You're right, it is!" he conceded, after a thoughtful pause. "Now here, dearest! Here's a piece of advice I want. Suppose somebody

knowingly, and in the belief that he was justified, did you a great injury. And suppose you could demonstrate to him that he was *not* justified, but in doing so you would be obliged to cause him intense misery and pain. And suppose, too, that in setting him right you would be enabled largely to obliterate the effects of his action on your life—would you, or would you not, be doing right in telling him the truth?"

The reply was instantaneous. "What you ask is simply an answer to a hypothetical question, and that, dear Van, is 'yes.' Remember, dearie, that aside from your own position such a man is more unfortunate in his ignorance—anyhow in the end—than he could possibly be in his knowledge of the truth. If somebody else was being injured by a man like that, you would be the first to point the error and injustice out. And one's deserved sufferings, dear, are hard enough in themselves to bear. You and I know that. And besides, how few are there, who being wrong, can be set right again, without encountering some pain? We must suffer, you know, before we can enjoy."

"Yes, and some people suffer and never come to peace. Look at Marie!"

You mean *here,* dear. Marie, and you, and I, will all have peace—in just a little while. Remember the motto in Mr. Storey's church—and Oh! isn't it grand to be able to look at things that way?"

"I suppose so," he answered, drawing her to him and planting a prolonged series of kisses on her brow. "But," he added, after he had thus eased his mind; "if I don't get some comfort after this affair tonight, I think I'll go out and shoot up the town. Another thing"—as a new thought sprang to life—"about Marie! What does she want to attend the meeting for, anyhow? It will be no place for her."

"I want her to go, Van. I want her to see how much the people think of you when it's all over. It will be an encouragement, dear, for her to speak. Don't you understand?"

,'My dear Dorothy," he said, with undisguised skepticism in his voice; "if one honest citizen of Red Hill shakes my hand after I'm through, I'll be in the Seventh Heaven of delight. But if Marie won't speak out to a lover such as Storey is; if she won't listen to your advice, the sight of

my self-inflicted torture isn't going to move her—not a blessed inch. I'm sure of that!" and he shook his head with an air of unalterable conviction.

"Marie," the little woman replied gently, "is following in your footsteps all the way. Whatever you do, dear, in her eyes is right. And she's trying—Oh! so hard, to do the right thing herself. When she sees and understands your victory tonight, she too, will take the step."

"And when she sees me turning tail in full retreat, she'll think she ought to profit by that, too!" For a time he continued staring moodily at the wall. Ah! if she, or Storey, or Bishop, or Marie, knew as he did, what a tragic night this one was destined now to be, how marvelously their thoughts would change. If Storey or Marie, with all of their presentiments could only guess the truth—.

"If it wasn't for you, sweetheart," he said finally, "this disclosure wouldn't seem so bad; but I feel—I almost grow faint hearted when—"

"My dear, dear boy!" she interrupted, with that sweet, that inexpressible smile that sanctified the spoken words; "I'll be here waiting—Oh! so happy, when you come. To know that you have thrown the burden off; that you are standing honestly before the world, with your worth and failings understood by all; to know that henceforth you will be estimated by what you really are, and not by what you may for a time appear to be; to know that no exposures yet to come, can take away a single friend, or alter the serenity of our lives—in all of this, my love, I shall rejoice with you, and enjoy the blessedness and comfort your bravery will bring. No, no, my dearie! you mustn't falter now. You must be courageous—and remember, you're doing this for me—and for the little ones. Isn't that a splendid reason, dear?"

For answer he folded her to his breast—held her while the minutes flew; while conflicting passions, surging across his brain, vacillated between the spectral memories of an unrecoverable past and ominous anticipations of the coming night. The encircling arms pressed tighter—still tighter, as if, inspired by the sublimity of a character so divine, he would drink to the full its chastening, fear dispelling influence, and thereby fortify himself against a trepidation that might, at the most inopportune of moments, venture to assert itself.

And then, the woman, fearful lest the very intensity of his emotion induce a reaction disastrous to his plans, gently but firmly disengaged herself, implanted a final kiss upon the crown of luxuriant and untrimmed hair, and moved toward the door. Once there, she turned and spoke:

"Dearie, you know that dinner is still waiting. Surely you are not going to do as Mr. Storey did, and compel me to eat alone!"

"Sweetheart," he answered, starting to arise, "I couldn't swallow a smell right now. Isn't Davey there?"

"He has already eaten and gone. You know, since you're not working today, he has his hands full with the men."

"What a fellow!" he commented. "Working all day, and mixing studies with songs and prayers for the best part of the night. I think, dearest"—picking up his hat—"I'll take a run over to Mother Grote's myself. She seems to be in line for callers today," and with a forced but merry whistle he left the house and started westward up the road.

Two years before, an industrious young German from the province of Alsace-Lorraine had arrived at Red Hill, and was given employment on Anholt's farm. At the end of a year he had invested his accumulated wages, together with the few dollars left him on his arrival, in a ten acre piece of land adjoining his employer's place. A short time later he had sent to Germany for his mother, who immediately came on and joined him. For lack of funds, his father—an invalid and very poor—was left for the time being with other relatives at home. Two days after his mother, who soon became known as Mother Grote, had been welcomed to his hastily constructed shack, and while hunting on the prairie to the southwest of the town, the young German was mortally wounded by the accidental discharge of his gun, and died within the week. The mortgage hanging over his property prevented the raising of more than sufficient money on it to defray the funeral expenses and cancel a few of the obligations contracted by the dead man in his preparations for the season's work. Farm labor was expensive and scarce, and Anholt, like the surrounding farmers, experienced difficulty in securing helpers enough for his own fields; the result being that the old woman, unable either to realize anything for herself from the sale of the property, or to secure the

necessary assistance in cultivating it, was left, an utter stranger, penniless, friendless and alone, in a country whose very language she was unable to speak or understand. Here, obviously, was a case after Anholt's own heart. He had made a pensioner of her; appointed Marie and Davey—both of whom spoke German—as his agents, and undertook to provide the means for her return to Germany when early spring arrived. During the winter she had suffered a severe attack of rheumatism, and this, together with a complication of other maladies incident to old age, had involved the expenditure of no small portion both of Marie's and Davey's time in attending to her wants. Recently a decided improvement in her condition had been noticeable, and strong hopes were entertained of her speedy recovery to a point where she could safely undertake the journey home. She had gradually picked up a little English; an acquisition which enabled Anholt, as well as Storey and Bishop, to assist in the work which Marie and Davey had so devotedly carried on.

It was with the hope of casting a little additional sunshine into the life of this unfortunate old soul, that Anholt, now endeavoring to forget his own distress, directed his footsteps to her door.

CHAPTER VII.

Two memorable nights, one preceding, one following Red Hill's first municipal election day, have left their indelible imprint on the pages of that town's history. And so long as authentic records stand; so long as traditionary lore hovers on wintry eves around the family hearth; so long as women whisper about imperial love, or innocence finds refuge in the sunshine of sweet infant eyes; so long as virtue, wavering before deep passion's onslaught, seeks in the lesson of some unfortunate's frailty protection for itself; so long as the flower of chivalry continues in its bloom, and right and wrong, with their inevitable rewards and punishments are taught to growing youth—so long will the incidents of those April nights inspire both truthful narrative and legendary tale.

Scarce had the first of the eventful hours—hours destined ere their close to furnish such amazing revelations to Red Hill—followed in the wake of day, when, as if by general understanding, every store and place of business in the place was closed, while the clerks and owners, succumbing to the tide of curiosity sweeping across the place, added their numbers to the procession headed in the direction of All Men's Church; a procession of men, women, and some few children, all influenced by the one overmastering, consuming desire to see and hear this man whose attitude was so entirely and outrageously at variance with what, as they had so earnestly contended, they had every right and reason to expect.

At the church itself, and long before the clock's hands pointed to the hour of eight, a remarkable scene, the like of which has never been duplicated in that town, met the eyes of such late comers as disdained to hasten with the common herd, lest their self-respect and dignity suffer loss; a scene that to this day is reproduced in wood cuts displayed on walls of homes and offices in that thriving little city of the west. The building was packed with an excited, talkative multitude. Benches from the porch had been hastily placed within the aisles and as quickly filled with the more aggressive of the impatient crowd. Around the sides of the room, with feet resting on the seats, and hands clutched tightly to the lamp brackets

overhead, a dozen of the younger and most athletic of the gathered populace were ranged. On the platform—as yet unoccupied by either the expected speaker or any of the citizens—a number of ordinary chairs were set, while near its center was placed a stand, holding some oddly shaped object, hidden beneath the folds of a cloth of sombre black, riveting the gaze of the people present, and supplying a further incentive to rash conjecturing and the queerest kind of prophesies.

Outside, the crowd was working itself into an uncomfortable frame of mind, while the church entrance was blocked by an increasing, surging mob, urged on in its endeavors to advance by the still less fortunate and equally disappointed ones behind. The windows, you will recall, were set high in the wall, their sills being on a level with the porch roof, and effectually preventing the throng of late arrivals from acquiring either by sight or hearing any knowledge of what transpired within. That is, all but the most daring of the lot, for the roof itself was a fairly satisfactory, if dangerous resting place for such as were brave enough to climb the posts and hang tenaciously to the window frames. This, therefore, will account for the fifty or more contented faces peering down upon a surprised and apprehensive audience—an audience which, despite its efforts, was unable to discern the slightest resemblance between the visages above and its mental picture of the seraphim who were supposed habitually to linger there when anything was going on inside.

Here then, as the hour of eight drew nigh, was an edifice crowded to a suffocating point, while a persistent, shoving horde blockaded the only means of exit save a small door in the rear, with another lot of excitement seekers preventing, to their great and imminent peril, the ingress of refreshing and revitalizing air through the windows which they filled. The yard and porch held their full quota of unlucky and speculating townsmen, presenting an appearance so clearly indicative of their mental state, that had any observing and uninformed stranger chanced to pass that way, he would immediately have assumed some guessing contest of extraordinary importance to be under way.

In other words, Red Hill and its immediate vicinity, so far as the adult population was concerned—children being at times the ablest kind of

nurses—was mustered here at All Men's Church, wondering, hoping, praying, fearing, guessing, prophesying, cursing, prepared for the worst, trusting for the best, and making a tremendous how-dy-do over a situation which, when simmered down, meant simply that a neighbor, unwilling to enter public life, deemed it advisable to tell them why. After all, what trivial things will turn wise mortals into fools!

However, moralization must be discarded if we are to record in our allotted space the happenings of this first of two well remembered nights; a necessity compelling our undivided attention for the present to the situation as it developed within the church. It is questionable whether the masculine element of the audience outnumbered that of the fair sex by so much as a baker's dozen, while in their ability to maintain an incessant volley of exclamations, neighborhood gossip, and critical mental and verbal appraisements of their acquaintances' wearing apparel, they were hopelessly outclassed. The men in fact, were typical specimens of that sturdy, honest, persevering and unostentatious manhood which in all lands and ages has been the force transforming the wilderness into fertile fields, and the barren waste into a decent habitat for those who follow on behind. Hard muscled, sun browned, clean cut individuals every one; many fresh from outlying farms, and all, whether literal residents of the new town proper or not, loyal to its interests, and uncompromising in their opposition to everything endangering its honorable and consistent growth.

Near the left hand aisle, looking from the platform, and well back toward the entrance, sat Marie, accompanied by the minister and Bishop—the latter having contented himself with this unsatisfactory position in deference to Anholt's expressed wish to be left alone in carrying out his mysterious program; a program for which he said he would provide the necessary characters as the need arose.

Among others in the audience were the Hawkins brothers, employees of the M. & B. F. Railroad; Jake Stahl, liveryman and unopposed candidate for the office of City Treasurer; Joe Fisher, store keeper and postmaster; Ben Wildey, who was studying law under Bishop, and who in the expectation of being elected City Counsel, had arranged for a special

examination at Bismarck, admitting him to practice; Reese Goodwin, owner and editor of the *Torch and Trumpet;* Tom Faraway, leading blacksmith of the town and one of Anholt's staunchest friends, and David Eastman, who alone, of all present, viewed matters with a placid, confident air, as provoking to Storey, who had a clear view of the young man's profile, as it was amusing to Bishop, who had long since surrendered himself to the inevitable, in whatever shape it might appear.

With the arrival of the crucial hour a marked subsidence in the previously unceasing hum and buzz of conversation became discernible, while with each recurrent scuffle among the closely wedged and importunate persons obstructing the entrance, every head in the assemblage turned in unison, hoping to catch sight of Anholt's face emerging through the group. Two—three—five minutes passed, and then as impatience began manifesting itself in subdued mutterings and restlessness, especially observable among the female contingent, the practically unnoticed door to the right of the platform opened, giving admission to a solitary person, who, after closing it quickly and securely, wended his way briskly through the adjacent seats and ascending the steps, stood calmly and quietly facing those whom he had called about him. Suddenly a loud "Hurrah!" started by some lusty lunged youth seated in the rear, was taken up and vociferously helped along by each and every man within the room, while the women, to most of whom gloves were a useless impediment, clapped vigorously with their hands, the meanwhile beaming delightedly around, now that the performance was getting under way. As for the subject of this ovation, he appeared neither dissatisfied nor pleased, but with an air of the utmost unconcern waited patiently for the enthusiastic display of confidence and good will to wear itself away.

His attire was anything but conventional—at least so Easteners would have deemed it, considering the purpose of his being there. A cheap, dark suit; soft flannel shirt, with a plain black four-in-hand tied loosely under the low turned collar; no vest; no adornments of any kind in the jewelry line; nothing but the comfortable, unpretentious garb known to every traveler in the west. The long hair was carefully brushed; the beard, to those well forward in the room, showed traces—very slight—of the

recent use of shears; the face was tanned; the body agile, well set and strong. All in all, just such a person as conservative observers would expect to follow conviction, regardless of where it led.

As quiet gradually ensued, he moved closer to the mysterious, draped object on the stand, raised one hand as if to prevent a repetition of the uproar, and in clear, even tones spoke briefly to the expectant crowd:

"My friends, I trust you will remain patient for just five minutes more. Some parties are expected on the Junction train, one of whom will address you before I do. As the train is in they should be here soon."

Hardly were the last words uttered when a violent commotion at the main entrance caused the audience to turn its eyes once more that way. Some persons, undoubtedly the ones to whom the speaker had referred, were endeavoring to force a passage through the compact mass of humanity holding possession of the spot.

"Make way there, please gentlemen!" shouted Anholt, adding, as one well recognized figure heaving into sight, paused and looked doubtfully around; "This way, sir! Come right down the aisle! I guess you can manage it!"

The one addressed, a short, thin, black moustached individual, with eye glasses resting upon a prominent and hook shaped nose, began threading his way toward the platform; a feat under the circumstances hardly conducive either to the maintenance of an unruffled temper or of an impressive dignity. As he approached Anholt a murmur of astonishment, arising from the gathering and accompanied by numerous hisses from various parts of the hall, disclosed the fact that he not only was known to a majority of those present but that his popularity was hardly on the rise. On reaching the steps leading to the stage he hesitated and gazed inquiringly at Anholt. The latter, answering the look in words distinctly audible to all, said:

"Come right up, Mr. Littleton! I understood you would come. Where," he continued, as the Junction lawyer neared him, "are your companions—your eastern clients, eh?"

Mr. Littleton halted abruptly, his shifty eyes peering through the gold rimmed glasses with a glance in which suspicion and craftiness

played equal parts. When he replied his voice was very low, as if indeed, he wanted none but Anholt to hear his words.

"How is that? I don't seem to understand! You—"

"Oh, fiddle sticks, sir!" came the interrupting retort; "they're both here, ready to do their dirty worst. Where is Jake Stahl?" turning to the audience. "Here Jake!" as the one called for stood up; "there are two men outside somewhere, whom I want to see on this platform. Will you be good enough to get them here?—by force if necessary! The name of one is Dubledіehl—S. Landseer Dubledіehl. The other is Mr. Samuel Withers. Will you do that, Jake?"

"I reckon I will, since you say so! I'll bring them to the side door!" answered the willing but wondering liveryman. Grabbing the key thrown him by Anholt, he started on his errand with a manner sufficiently rough shod to secure him a comparatively easy passage.

As for the assembled Red Hillians, who had viewed the singular development with astonished, blinking eyes, their cup of joy approached already the running over stage. Never had they experienced such pleasurable suspense; never had they realized the delirious exultation which attendance at a political gathering can produce; never had their hearts so fluttered, or their ears been so alert, or their tongues so paralyzed as at this moment when the lawyer Littleton, having called out to Jake Stahl that the gentlemen would be there anyhow, stepped forward to speak to them.

"These-ah gentlemen," he ventured, "are clients of mine and-ah your good friends. The fact is, I-ah had expected, so to speak, to present you with-ah grave evidence on a matter which bears, as it were, on your-ah elections tomorrow. But-ah this wonderful outpouring has upset—I-ah —that is, in a way—"

"It needn't to," came the prompt assurance from Anholt, "and when you talk, talk out! You were told you would be given an opportunity to say your say. But bring your clients on first. That's what these seats are for. I think," he added, his voice still raised, "they're standing inside the door there now. Suppose you invite them up!"

Still again every eye was directed to the entrance. Were they—yes, unquestionably, he was right. Two strangers, distinguishable in the sea of well known faces hedged about them, were watching with uncertain, irresolute glance the proceedings on the platform, doubtful whether to advance, withdraw or remain, uncomfortable, where they were—the cynosure of inquisitive and scrutinizing looks. No need to describe them, either one. Too frequently have their personalities impressed themselves upon our minds. There they were, their portentous presence arousing in their intended victim's mind passions long dormant and restrained, but now, if that strange glitter in his eyes was indicative of anything, destined to provoke a line of action whose dénouement would be ripe with tragedy and surprise.

Of all the incredible things that somehow happen in this world, what more astounding, more inexplicable than this—the reentrance of Dubledieh1 and Withers into the range of Anholt's life at a time, and place, and under conditions such as these?

CHAPTER VIII.

Five minutes passed. Withers and Dubledіehl, in response to the beckoning finger of Littleton had successfully negotiated the passage leading to the platform, on which, ignoring the presence of Anholt, they now stood, consulting in subdued voices with the attorney, and oblivious both to the impressive stillness pervading the assemblage and the enigmatical smile with which the chief actor in the evening's proceedings followed their every move.

Time apparently, had wrought but little change in either. Perhaps the hair of Withers was a trifle whiter—its sparseness a little more observable. Perhaps, too, the face of Dubledіehl was more rotund, more indicative of the sensualist, but otherwise they looked as when we saw them last—prosperous, well groomed and cynical.

One curious incident had, for the moment, distracted Anholt's attention from the new arrivals. As they stepped upon the stage, a sound, like a cry half stifled, had issued from some place in the rear of the hall, followed almost immediately by a slight stir in the corner where Marie, Storey and Bishop sat. Then, ere his eyes had turned away, these three—his friends—arose and moved quickly toward and out through the crowd of spectators jammed around the door. Except for those in close proximity to the scene not twenty persons in the audience had observed their exit nor given attention to the cry. To Anholt alone had the peculiar occurrence appealed as deserving of more than passing notice. Turning his attention again to Littleton, whose plans seemed likely to become still more disarranged, he requested that gentleman and his companions to seat themselves, adding as they complied:

"You'll have your opening in just a minute more." Glancing over the assemblage until his eyes again caught sight of Stahl, who had managed to find another seat, he addressed that gentleman for the second time: "I'm sorry, Jake, to bother you again, but if you and

Tom Faraway over there will step up here, you'll oblige me greatly. And if," he continued, his glance meanwhile searching around the room, "if Dr. O'Grady is present, will he kindly hold himself in readiness for a—a professional call? Ah! thank you, Doctor," as the one inquired for stood up. "Now boys!"—to Stahl and Faraway, who had reached the platform—"do you mind taking seats right there behind those gentlemen," indicating Withers and Dubledichl, with a nod. "That's it! Thanks!"

Were ever individuals so thoroughly non-plussed as those now seated on the stage, or a gathering of mortals so entirely puzzled and amazed as was this one congregated here in All Men's Church tonight?

With the preliminaries completed to his satisfaction, Anholt walked to the platform's front, his eyes swept over the hundreds of familiar, waiting faces, and then in a silence so intense that the ticking of watches could be heard, he spoke:

"My friends, in tendering me the highest official position in Red Hill, you have honored me greatly; far more than any words of mine can tell. I have declined the honor for reasons which appear to me entirely adequate and right. But I appreciate that reasons, however good, unless disclosed to you, must place me in the unenviable position of appearing to be not alone an ingrate, but a defaulter in civic obligations and moral duty; as a useless citizen whose selfish character renders him an unfit associate for any honest townsman. Because of this I invited you here tonight. Because of this I proposed as a matter of justice to us both to risk the severance of friendship's ties—ties which for over two years past have been cherished as among the dearest possessions of my life. Because of this I intended tearing the mask from off my past, leaving you to determine, in the face of such evidence as I should give, the question of my fitness to hold official position in your midst. Today I learned that other men in possession of the facts, have taken it upon themselves to enlighten you concerning me. I learned that an attorney at Beaver Junction had been employed by them to present the evidence which they have so labo-

riously amassed, bearing on my past career. I learned that he, perhaps with a due appreciation of the reception likely to be accorded him were these charges supported by nothing more than his statement based upon the letters from his clients, had insisted on their being here in person; told them probably, how grateful you would be, and assured them of the high regard in which, owing to such disinterested action on their part, they would be held by Red Hill's citizens; convinced them, doubtless, that as loyal Americans and Christian gentlemen, no personal inconvenience should be permitted to operate against their assisting in ridding this city of my contaminating presence. Well, these gentlemen are here. They shall have the privilege now, of speaking through their willing and well compensated tool. My friends, Mr. Littleton, of Beaver Junction! Grant him, I beg of you, an opportunity to earn his pay."

Anholt, done speaking, stepped back and bowed almost imperceptibly to the lawyer. For a minute the stillness was much like that of death. Then followed a low murmur, gradually increasing in volume until it resembled the buzz of voices prevalent before the speaker came. Suddenly a voice—"Go on pardner, tell us yourself!" and another—"You're good enough for us, Anholt!" and still another—"Throw the Junction coyote out! Hurrah for Red Hill! Hurrah for Anholt! Hurrah! Hurrah!" The shout was taken up with a spontaneity and vigor causing the very overhanging beams to shake, and bringing to the minds of Littleton and his companions with irresistible force, a full realization of the delicate, if not indeed perilous ground on which they had presumed to tread. Anholt, touched, though he was, with this manifestation of loyalty on the part of his sturdy compatriots, felt entirely too anxious to have done with the coming disagreeable ordeal to encourage a prolongation of the outburst. Instead, he walked again to the front of the stage, raised his left hand in entreaty for quiet, and motioned with his right for Littleton to advance and have his say; the last thing in the world at that particular moment the Beaver Junction attorney cared about doing, and the only thing under the circumstances it was possible for him to do. Consequently, making of

necessity a virtue, he leaned over to Dubledichl, spoke a few short words to him, stood up, placed a bundle of papers on his chair, buttoned his dignity-enhancing Prince Albert with nervous fingers, and, as the noise subsided, moved forward, apparently determined to make, as Anholt had suggested, a heroic effort to justify his fee. It was inevitable that the Red Hill spirit, ever prepared to rise in arms at the slightest provocation attributable to Beaver Junction enterprise, should strain at its leashes, now that the full import of the lawyer's intentions dawned upon the understanding of the assembled crowd, and if his expected accusatory remarks, directly aimed at their respected townsman, but indirectly reflecting on them all, should go unchallenged until he had quite finished, it would be entirely due to their regard for the wishes of Anholt as evidenced by his present attitude, rather than because of any Chesterfieldian tendencies operating in Littleton's behalf. So far as the latter was concerned, it is conceivable that his mind was in a state infinitely more perturbed than that of the man whose record, he expected to prove, would disqualify him in the opinion of Red Hill from holding any position either of honor or of trust. In truth, his plans were sadly in disarray, while his projected coup assumed more and more the general outlines of a boomerang. He had designed a master stroke; one that would endear him to every resident of the new municipality, and incidently insure his acquiring a goodly portion of its legal work. Yes, on this, election eve, he would invite the leading citizens to a conference in All Men's Church—since the town possessed no other place available for the meeting—and there, in confidential session, he would aid in averting by his disclosures, the awful, threatening calamity. Thus he would wipe away old scores, and phoenix-like rise with re-established credit from the ashes, not of his own, but of another's blackened and destroyed reputation. Like a guardian angel he would appear to the people of Red Hill, rescuing them from the consequences of their own impetuous folly and ignorance. He would present his clients—the men whom, through his indefatigable efforts he had induced to come so far—with their testimony and corroborative documents. He

would do all of this at the supreme, the psychological hour, returning afterward with these same clients to Beaver Junction, and there await his substantial, acceptable and deserved reward. Thus he had planned, and now, alas! his plans had run amuck. A valid reason—was it not? why he should present his charges in the most impartial way, and leave it to the Easterners to fire the heavy guns. Such was the process of mental argument inducing the following speech:

"Ladies and Gentlemen! I think I must—ah tell you that my clients and—ah myself also, are here from, as I may term it, a sense of duty, and —ah in your behalf. It is to me a painful occasion when I am compelled to speak disparagingly of anyone; especially, let me say, of any resident of—ah this very delightful and—ah promising city." (Cries of "Taffy!" "Cut it out!" Get down to business!") "If you will permit me to—ah explain, you will agree with me, I am sure, that—ah my clients deserve great praise for their unselfish efforts to save you from a—ah very grave mistake." (Cries of "Sit down!" "Hurry up!") "These honorable gentlemen, I would explain, learned in a—a most accidental way that—ah your Mr. Anholt was seeking your honest votes as candidate for the—ah very exalted position of Mayor of——." (Voice, "It's a damned lie, he didn't.")—"as I repeat, the Mayor of this honest community, and having heard—having knowledge of—ah very serious offenses alleged to have been committed by him, deemed it their duty as loyal citizens of this—ah great and glorious Republic to—ah, as it were, lay the matter before the proper officials. These honorable gentlemen, therefore, wrote—I—ah should say Mr. Dubledieh1 wrote to our popular and very able prosecuting attorney, who did me the very great honor of—ah placing the case in my hands to investigate. Feeling so deeply interested in—ah your welfare, as I may say, I answered the gentleman and was shocked—perhaps I—ah should say astounded, at the mass of information submitted me. At his request I undertook the most unpleasant task of——." (Voice, "What'd you soak 'em for, Cal?")—"of assisting these gentlemen in their —ah very unselfish work. I—ah have here the evidence supporting these very grave charges, and under the direction of my honorable clients I—ah will, with your permission, present it." (Cries of "What are they?"

"Read your proof!") "I will, gentlemen—and ladies, in a minute. I want to—ah state, that feeling the very great responsibility I took upon myself in acquainting you with your, as I might say, danger, I managed to—ah induce these gentlemen to come, at their very great cost and inconvenience, to our wonderful, our progressive country, to—ah aid us, as it were, in this very unpleasant duty." (Cries of "Who is 'us'?" and "What are the charges?") "I—ah, perhaps I had better read them now. They are, you must remember, very carefully prepared and——" (Voice, "Read 'em, or shut up!")—a final interruption causing the self-constituted trustee of Red Hill's "political morality" to suddenly reach to an inner pocket of that carefully treasured coat and extract therefrom a folded, typewritten sheet, which he proceeded to read to the audience without further ado. As Davey declared afterward, "there was no use talking, Mr. Littleton was getting awfully mixed up," and it must, indeed, have been a welcome relief to that perplexed individual to be able to read now from the paper in his hands, instead of being obliged to rely on a mind so radically out of gear. He read as follows:

"We, the undersigned, residents of the city, county and state of New York, United States of America, in obedience to the dictates of our conscience and with a full sense of the obligations owing by one citizen of this Republic to his fellow citizens, wherever they may be, and with the earnest desire to assist, so far as lies within our power, in promoting the welfare, both moral and material, of the newly incorporated city of Red Hill, North Dakota, and with a knowledge and appreciation of the danger to which that city is exposed by the candidacy of Anson Van Anholt for the office of Mayor, do hereby, in the interest of civic morality, especially as it pertains to the aforesaid new municipality of Red Hill, and in order that its citizens may be thoroughly informed as to the character of the said Anson Van Anholt, declare the following charges to be accurate, unprejudiced, and based upon reliable documentary evidence, a portion of which is herewith submitted, and all of which is available for inspection by any properly accredited agent of Red Hill. We charge as follows:

1. That Anson Van Anholt was an inmate of the Indiana State Industrial School for Boys, being committed there after conviction on the charge of forgery.

2. That he was later confined, after due legal process in the Central Insane Asylum of Illinois.
3. That he is a graduate of the New York State Reformatory, to which institution he was sentenced after pleading guilty to the charge of larceny.
4. That he is a promoter of fraudulent companies.
5. That he is a bankrupt.
6. That he is a gambler.
7. That he is a fugitive from justice.

The accompanying affidavits, papers, and duplicate records, are offered in support of the above charges.

(Signed) SAMUEL WITHERS,
S. LANDSEER DUBLEDIEHL.

Witness:
ISAAC CONE.

"Now gentlemen—and ladies," continued Littleton, folding the inculpatory paper, "I—ah will, with your permission, read the proofs which my honorable clients have so-ah, let me say, so unselfishly gathered for your benefit."

We compared the stillness a short time back to that of death. This comparison should have been reserved for the present moment. No other term can adequately express the unnatural, absolute, awful silence following the speaker's words. Men and women sat like statues—immovable, bewildered, dazed. None saw the accuser; all eyes were focused on the one accused. He alone seemed satisfied—positive of his ground. Dubledieh1 and Withers had grown more apprehensive as their representative talked. Where was the exultation, where the joy, where that delicious quivering of the nerves signalizing the approach of a long anticipated victory? Why that subtle, overwhelming sense of dread, intruding its phantasmal presence like some hideous pall depriving one of light? Where were the hisses, the invectives, the threats that were to have been showered on Anholt—the congratulations, thanks, and approving glances for themselves? Where the cowering, whining and exposed creature, slinking with averted countenance through the crowd? where the boasted influence of Littleton—his powerful, convincing denunciation of this brazen renegade? Why, as he stopped to select the incriminating documents from among the papers on his chair, did not some-

body speak—say something, to relieve the fearful tension? Then, a slight movement at the door, and Withers looking up, started and dropped his cane. What necromantic happening was this, which brought the Rev. Melville Storey and—Oh! most inconceivable of things—the gambler Bishop upon the scene? And now, as he would seek enlightenment from the one at whose solicitation he had come so far, what meant that fellow back there standing up, and why that vulgar, unexpected question hurled across the room?

"What in Hell do we want with any proof? Sit down, you Beaver Junction dog! Git after him, Anholt!" and from another, "Give the durn shyster fits, pardner!" and from Joe Fisher, "I tell you Anholt, if you don't do somethin' to him purty quick, sure's shootin' I'll do it myself!" and from others, "Answer him, Anholt!" "Put them papers up!" "Lynch the liar!" "Kick 'em all out!" "Talk up, Anholt!" and so it went. Pandemonium reigned, and threats and jeers and hisses transformed the house of worship into a bedlam of enraged and shouting Red Hillians, less incensed perhaps, over the charges aimed at Anholt, than at the incredible audacity of this insolent Junction pup. That was the acme of criminal achievement; the one unpardonable, unforgetable offense. Now Anholt, alive to the danger, walked toward them, nodding Littleton to his seat. Both hands were raised—kept there—aloft, until calm succeeded tempest; until the heavy breathing ceased again, and passions fell and the people waited for his words. No need for Littleton to read the proof. Anholt's hour had come. Freedom was waiting for his call. It came at last, in tones so low, yet so distinct and clear that not a syllable was missed by those who listened to him speak.

"My friends, you ask my answer. You shall have it. My only request is, that you hear me patiently to the end. Five and thirty years ago a male child was born. The parents were honest—poor. While yet a boy—eight years of age, he lost his father—by death. The family was left penniless. The mother struggled as a seamstress to raise and educate her children. At twelve years of age the boy quit school, jumped into the breach, sold newspapers, worked here and

there, and did his best to help lighten his mother's load. Early manhood came, finding him the family's sole support. He was honest, ambitious, respected. Offered a lucrative position in a larger city he accepted, grew in favor with his employers, and promised to become an important factor in their business. But—the unlucky associations came. He was picking for sharpers; became their innocent tool, and was left to hold the bag. Guiltless as any man or woman in this house, he was convicted. His spotless record secured him clemency. He was sentenced, despite his age, to a state industrial school for boys. While there he was pardoned and placed on the pay roll as one of the brother officers of the school. A change of administration came. New employees were engaged and he sought employment in the outside world. Well, society wouldn't have him. Wouldn't be defiled by his presence. He might be given work but—the other employees would object. No, he wasn't wanted anywhere, at anything, by anybody. The spirit revolted. Very well! he would deserve what society was determined to give him. He clutched it—society—by the throat. It, in turn, with fiendish ingenuity, called him mad—insane, and in self protection placed him behind asylum doors. He had always been a student—was a student here—now and then killed time by writing an article for some local sheet. They were accepted—paid for—published. He believed he had found a vocation in which he would find immunity from the past. He made application for release, was examined, and freed. Fortune favored him—temporarily. He possessed a speculative instinct—followed it in addition to his literary work, and prospered. Then, a good woman came on the scene. The miracle occurred and she was his. With her and his quickly acquired fortune he would seek the center of all things; would invade Wall Street—the David challenging Goliath. This time the miracle didn't work. David fell in time, and with him fortune, then comforts, then pride; all save the love and confidence of his wife. The night grew darker; sickness came, and with it hunger—terrible, sickening want. Then winter, and all the word implies in the city without a heart. No fire, no medicine, no food. Death lurking at the door and—the pale, pathetic and ever trusting countenance of the wife; the little, suffering, patient

woman who had never yet complained. Employment?—where were his credentials? Resort to the pen?—what! with mind in turmoil such as his? Snow shoveling?—where the shovel; where the strength, or food wherewith to get it? The pawnshop?—long since taken advantage of to the limit of their possessions. Friends?—never! Begging?—for her sake, yes! Crime?—yea, if need be to preserve her life. The opportunity came. The man succumbed. The wife was saved. Again he stood before a court; from there to the State Reformatory of New York. Free in less than a single year, he started out anew. His guide-star was his wife. But he had learned long since to fear society—its taunts and jeers. Therefore he would forever cover up the past. Men should never see the abscess in his heart. But men—some of them, you know, have long and very curious noses. Some love to hide their own delinquencies by baring those of other men. They revel in vituperation. A sand-bagged reputation at their feet is bliss; a ruined home—another man's—the greatest desideratum of their lives. Such men as these barked and snapped continuously at this young man's heels. They had ferreted out the truth. He knew it—they saw to that, and then played around him like a cat around a mouse. They saw that hints and innuendoes were spread around broadcast—loved to sit, and watch, and gloat as blows fell here and there upon the helpless, unprotected man. Did he make a friend—theirs to see that he became an enemy instead. Did he secure the confidence of an honest man—theirs to utter but a word and faith turned to distrust. Despite all this, the man—thank God! preserved his conscience clean. He had his wife, you understand, and because of that retained the strength to grin and bear. Stabbed in the back, he fell to rise again—kept on fighting, suffering, daily moving closer to his goal. He came west—back to nature; purchased a farm, and in time paid off his debts. Surely now he must be on the road to peace. Acknowledging now, once and for all, this man to be myself, three charges just presented you, stand out entirely proved.

Inmate of Industrial School.....Yes.
Patient in Insane Asylum.....Yes.
Graduate of a Reformatory.....Yes.

Fradulent companies? Well, there was a company organized by me. Men invested on my say so. One of the kind of creatures I tell you of, scenting my success, walked in, instilled his poison in each subscriber's mind, cared not a rap about their loss, and chuckled at the great smash-up. Well, every man connected with it got his money back with interest. There's a package, sealed, stowed away over in Joe Fisher's safe. He's authorized to open it. He'll find this company's incorporation papers there. He'll find each subscriber's address and name, and what's more to the point just now, he'll find a letter from each one—or rather, all but one—acquitting me of fraudulent intent, acknowledging they've made a little profit on the deal, and thanking me for what I've done. There's another company that I helped to float. I'll be glad to give its name to any man that asks. Fraudulent? Well, it paid last year some eighty-four per cent. This year the business is bigger than it ever was. Promoter of fraudulent companies? You know my farm—every one of you. Understand me now, I'll give it free and clear to any person, I don't care who is he, that names a crooked company I've ever been connected with. Bankrupt? Gambler? The offer holds good there. Let any man prove that I've been at any time in my career in bankruptcy proceedings—let him show that at any time for ten years past I've played a game of chance for gold, and the farm is his. Mr. Littleton claims to have the evidence. He'll have a chance to submit it. Fugitive from justice? Where are the officers? I'm easily found. The presence of these—gentlemen here proves that. What is the charge—who the complainant? Show me that I'm wanted on any charge that hasn't been faked up and you'll hold title to one of the richest farms—size considered—in the state of North Dakota.

"My friends, year in, year out, I've striven according to my lights, to make some reparation for the past; for acts committed when I learned that society disowned me. Time and again when I felt almost secure, one or more of these vile things in human shape that I spoke about, reared its ugly head, opened its venomous lips, and I had the fight to make again. I might have stood it longer, but there was a beloved wife, and—a babe—God given—innocent. With them I came out here, hoping, praying that

we might find some measure of content. Since that time you know what my life has been. Because you knew it you tendered me a priceless gift; priceless because of the confidence inspiring it. I refused it—you insisted. I decided then that you should know the whole, unappetizing truth. I invited you to meet me here, and then I found that all the curs were not yet dead. They were still hounding me—would be here—in at the death; their protruding fangs showing at the sacrifice, prepared to do their devilish worst. Well, that suited me; they should be welcomed. They are here—have made their charges, and the answer is 'up to you'. But my friends, before you act, I trust you'll hear me out. I intend for the present to cast all charity, all pity, all sympathy to the winds. I shall, if you prefer to term it so, wallow in revenge. I propose to send the chickens home to roost. I'll tear the cloak of rank hypocrisy from off these disinterested gentlemen from the East. For once—for these few minutes only—I hope to mete out vengeance to the fullest measure of my powers. I'll compare accusers with accused. My friends, my fellow citizens, listen carefully, I pray you now to what I say, and Littleton," he added, stepping back and addressing the Beaver Junction man, "these men are your clients, but you're to keep your mouth shut, understand? until I'm through, and that"—turning on Withers and Dubledieh!—"applies to you two men as well."

For a moment he stood there, motionless as a figure graved in stone; except for that queer, undecipherable gleam within his eyes, expressionless as the Sphynx. His hands, half clenched, were hanging at his sides. His thoughts, to all appearances, were countless miles away. Faithfully had the audience complied with his request. Nothing, save now and then a cough, or a movement at some window where the footing was unsafe, served to discount the impressiveness of his words. Surprise, suspense, held them all enthralled. No past master of the stage directors' art could have designed a setting more eloquent of coming tragic things.

Now the head of Anholt turns. His glance is fastened on the older man. His arm is slowly raised until the finger points directly at the wrinkled face. As slowly is it dropped again. The eyes are turned toward the audience. He speaks.

CHAPTER IX.

"I said a moment since that I would cast all pity to the winds. I must retract that. It's impossible for me to look on that old man"—turning to Withers—"without feeling something akin to sympathy, despite his having been, with one or two exceptions, the most implacable and bitter enemy I've ever had. I've lost more friends by reason of his machinations than through any other person on this earth. He never dropped a penny at my hands; never experienced the slightest injury because of me; nor has he ever stated, so far as I can learn, why he pursues me so relentlessly. It started when, on my release from prison, I was offered membership in an organization of which at one time he had been the head. From that time until the day I left the East, he tried to make my life a hell. He gave no reason, but dogged me persistently, savagely, and discredited me at every turn. I will say this, that when I left New York he ceased to harry me—that is, so far as I could tell. I will say further, that I believe he came here tonight because of arguments advanced by Mr. Littleton and one other man. Long years ago, my friends, this old man was possessed of a happy home, a loving wife, and an adored child—a daughter. He, a manufacturer of drugs and a successful business man, was a Christian—tender-hearted, kind and true. One day a poor devil came his way and asked for work; acknowledged he had been a criminal and had just been freed from prison. This old gentleman employed him, trusted him, treated him practically as he would a son. One night the former convict disappeared, and with him not alone some twenty thousand dollars from his benefactor's safe, but a greater, a priceless treasure—the daughter whom the parents idolized. From that day forward, no demon deep in hell excelled the outraged father in devising tortures for sinners coming within his reach. He spent a fortune seeking for the miscreant and his child. The search was fruitless. Years passed, and then—one day a letter came—a letter from the way-

ward girl. She plead for his forgiveness; said the scoundrel who had lured her off was dead; said she had a baby, was sick, penniless—a hopeless invalid thrown upon the streets. She begged that he, for her child's sake and not her own, assist her in her dire distress. He answered in brutal, merciless, unforgiving terms. Told her he would kick her from his threshold if she dared to show her face. In time his chosen helpmate died. She had urged unceasingly their daughter's cause. He had been obdurate, inexorable. But with his wife's death a softening influence came. Loneliness brought horrors to his mind. The Divine Spirit of forgiveness began somehow to manifest itself—so far as the disowned and sinning daughter was concerned. He felt that he needed her—wanted her—would like to see this little grandson she had written him about. For the sake of his dead wife he would try hard to forgive; would take the erring one to his arms again; would strive to bring the little fellow up in righteous ways. Too late. All trace of them was lost. Another fortune went in efforts to discover them. This, too, without results. And so his life grew darker, his hairs whiter,his heart more bitter against all men who chanced to sin. He became a monomaniac in his aversion to any plan designed to work the reformation of a criminal. Such men were better dead—a thousand times, he claimed. Let one presume to cross his path, and he would assist in sending them straight to hell—the only fit place for them to dwell. All of this, you understand, will help to explain his attitude to me. One winter's night, a little over five years ago, I ran across a young man lying on a New York street, bruised and bleeding from the effects of a policeman's club. Before the officer who had gone to summon the patrol returned, I managed to get the unconscious fellow in a cab, and afterward saw that he received the proper kind of care. Undoubtedly a character of the streets, there was something about him that appealed to me. Something telling of good blood, of a temperament naturally opposed to wrong. Well, I helped him on his feet, found him work, and he was on the highway to become a useful, honest man. I come now to a digression essential to your understanding of what comes later. There is no vice or habit so hideous in all

this world, as the use of what we know as cocaine, or coke, to use the vulgar name. There are no criminals so low or vile as those who place this mind-wrecking alkaloid or poison in the public's hands, marked as some innocent remedy—usually a so-called cure for catarrh. I—will you remain quiet, sir, until I'm done?" Anholt, with lightening like rapidity, swung around as he uttered the unexpected words. Withers, who had started up with an exclamation of undisguised anger, settled back, his lips again compressed, and a deepening pallor on his face.

"Well, this young man," continued Anholt, "by the chance use of the hellish stuff, became a cocaine fiend; became a victim to this soul-consuming drug, just as he was reaching the portals of success and of an honorable, respected life. No need to tell you how this loathsome habit works. Suffice to say that the man went to the dogs; ambition was lost; all sense of honor gone; he became a sickly, dull eyed, chalky-faced, irresponsible brute. He craved but one thing in this life—cocaine. *That* he must have by fair means or by foul. His money was gone; therefore he would steal the stuff. He was discovered in the act. He escaped for the time being, but the officer who had caught him, was afterward found mortally wounded near the scene of the robbery. He believed the robber, Robert MacNamara by name, had shot him—accused him of it with his dying breath. The young fellow was arrested, protested his innocence and—convicted. I believed him guiltless—employed counsel to prove it. The organization to which this old gentleman here—Mr. Withers—belongs, might have helped—perhaps saved him. I tried to interest its members, but this man opposed it strenuously, and used his influence not to save, but to convict the accused man. I said he was convicted, but before the day of sentence he took matters into his own hands and committed suicide—hung himself in his cell, proclaiming with his last words his absolute innocence. One year ago a convict, dying in Sing Sing, confessed to the murder. He had robbed an apartment above the store which this young man had entered—was leaving, and supposed the officer was after him. I have some papers bearing on this young man's birth and

life; also a little piece of jewelry—a locket, forwarded me by him on the day he took his life."

Anholt stepped back, advanced toward his trembling, aged foe, and lifting his hand, pointed it once again at the twitching, ashen face.

"And now, *you,* Samuel Withers—implacable enemy of mine! *You,* who dares pass judgment on the weaknesses of your fellow men! *You,* who can see no good in any mortal save yourself. *You,* the spotless! *You,* the righteous! *You,* you damnable hypocrite—can you guess now what those papers sent me tell?"

Up went the bony arm, as if to ward some awful vision off. *Back* flew the head, as if to escape an impending blow. The eyes closed, opened, closed again. The dry, parched lips, opening as if to speak, gave utterance merely to some inarticuate sound. Dubledіehl grunted as if the scene had brought him nothing but disgust. Littleton, moving as if he would protect his client, settled back at a glance from Anholt's eyes. The audience, leaning forward—some standing—awaited breathlessly the words to come.

"Samuel Withers, your daughter became a common prostitute. Her child—your grandson, grew up a product of the East Side slums. *You* could have saved them both. She wrote in French—the French you taught her when she was still your pure, beloved little girl—a letter, sir, to you, and left it, together with a statement covering all her miserable life and wrongs, in the hands of a woman who had agreed to keep the child. That letter I shall hand you here tonight. She placed a locket—do you remember it?—with the picture of your wife inside, around her baby's neck. That locket, too, I shall restore to you. Oh, wretched, miserable, most unhappy of all men! You, whose daughter died a woman of the streets! You, whose grandson died a suicide, a thief, a fiend addicted to the use of drugs—drugs which *you,* as manufacturer, placed upon the market; victim to the so-called remedy which has to *you* brought fortune, and to countless thousands whom your lying labels have deceived, woe, and misery, and crime! You, but for whom your daughter, virtuous still, might be gladdening your closing years! You, but for whom your grandson now might be

an honored citizen! *You,* you self-sufficient, self-opinionated high priest of pharisaism! What say yau to me now? To me, the man you've hounded; the only man who ever tried to lift your grandson to his feet! You want the evidence! Well, by God it's here! *Here,* do you understand?—before your eyes! Look! Do you recognize the writing—the locket? Do you see it? Ah! I though—you're nervous man—here, let me open it! See! Look! the face—the wo—. Ah, at last! I knew—I guessed! Tom—Doctor O'Grady—get him quick! Here Jake, hold him—steady! So—that's it!"

Each successive word of Anholt's, as he drove the awful revelation home, had increased the agitation of the older man. What room was there for argument, for denial, or for doubt? Aye! in truth the evidence was there. The well remembered writing, the locket—golden, and now worn thin, that years—it seemed, indeed, almost ages ago, had nestled snugly on the fair throat of his Margaret—his Madge—she of the sunshine long since passed away. Yes, he would, he must assure himself—must examine it. But he—yes, Anholt was right. He was a—yes, a little—just a little nervous. Perhaps—well—the other had better open it. Any—yes, he heard him talking about—well—funny he couldn't quite catch the drift—and that—that buzz—sort of—all kinds of strange, whirling—like the dark. Yes it was—coming—he would——, and thus he passed from consciousness to dark; in one hand the letter from beyond the grave; in the other, the locket now sanctified by memories placing it far beyond the power of any wealth to buy.

Anholt, fearful lest some of the more excitable members of the audience might rush upon the stage, addressed them in a few reassuring words—words confirmed a moment later by Dr. O'Grady, who pronounced the stricken man entirely safe. Littleton, arising to protest against the "incredible assault" upon the reputation of his client, had been shoved unceremoniously back into his seat by Stahl, while Dubledichl, profiting by his observation of the incident, stuck firmly to his chair and closed his mouth. Just now his mental faculties were unusually alert. Besides there was that singular, undefinable, persist-

ent something advising him to make due preparations for a bit of trouble of his own.

On the doctor's suggestion, Anholt called for Davey and Ben Wildey to assist the gradually recovering Withers to the yard. "He needs fresh air at once," Dr. O'Grady said, "and he'll require some very careful watching for a day or two."

"That," Anholt had replied, "is exactly what he'll get. If you'll help those boys get him safely to my house—the old four-seater is outside—and remain there until I arrive, I'll be your friend for life. For the present, though, I've got a little further doings here."

"I wonder," he added to himself, "where in thunder Bishop and that preacher have strayed off to again! Well, anyhow, so far, so good, and now for the high cockalorum of all the mongrel curs—that is, if the crowd will stand for it!"

What insensate kind of observation, this? One might as well imagine Storey quitting at the soup.

* * * * *

"My friends, I will with your permission, pay my respects now to the second member of this philanthropic delegation; of this unselfish, odoriferous pair, who evince an interest so abnormal in the welfare of yourselves. Pardon me a moment—Jake, do you mind sitting there at the right of Mr. Dubledichl, and you, Tom, at his left? Mr. Littleton can take another seat. You, Dubledichl, stay where you are, and keep that mouth of yours closed tight. Boys, if he moves before I've finished, land him! Afterward, if he wants to, let him talk!" Again Anholt addressed the audience:

"My friends, at times nature, probably for diversity's sake, places a freak in human form upon this earth. This deviation from the normal type may be a purely physical one, or it may manifest itself in some remarkable eccentricity of the brain. In the latter case the unfortunate can be judged by no ordinary rule. The law of cause and effect refuses to hold good. Seek as you will, you can find no adequate motive for the things he does. Frequently they take the form of a

most intense and unreasonable hatred of his fellow men. Devoid himself of any impulse either unselfish or honorable, he measures humanity in general by the standard of his own depraved tastes, and finds his chief amusement in effecting the ruination of some one else—if that person be a friend, so much the greater joy. Friendship to him, is but a fancy, a delusion, a cloak behind which some ulterior motive lurks. He knows, because does he not judge everybody by himself? Well, my friends, I'm going now to tell you of a monstrosity such as this. It—or let me use the pronoun he—walked one day, some three years since, into an office of which I was in charge. He was hard up, hungry, wanted work. I gave it to him, paid his board bill, treated his as you would a long lost brother whom you loved. He was a native of Great Britain—born in the Isle of Man, and had knocked about the world for years. Discarded by his family, a pauper in friends, a failure in everything he ever tried, he was taken in by me and accepted as an equal, regardless of his having just recovered from a long debauch, despite my knowledge that he lied the first time that he ever spoke to me, in face of evidence as clear as daylight that he had been a thief. I say I helped him—and, I watched him. From that day down to this I've never heard him speak a good word of a single man, whether that person be alive or dead. I've never known him to pay an honest debt, unless he was compelled. I've never known him to possess a friend except myself, and he killed my friendship through his slanderous tongue. Well, he had a cousin with an axe to grind; who wanted to control a great industry here in these United States. The company itself was to a British one, floated over there, but the active management must be native to this soil. Between the two—the cousin and the man I tell about—they framed it up that I should manage the enterprise. The cousin was a broker. I was to be his tool, wherewith he would manipulate the stock market to his own advantage—to the shareholders' and the company's loss. I took the management, but—I didn't play the tool. I did make the company a success. These two worthies that I'm speaking of, had made a handsome rakeoff from the deal—in floating the company, understand? But they

wanted more, and I stood in the way. Therefore they must discredit me. They raked my own past troubles up and held them as a threat before my eyes. Well, I resigned! Cowardly, perhaps—but I saw that neither one of them should profit by my act. The company—I spoke of it before—paid last year, as I told you, some eighty-four per cent. in dividends, and is flourishing. When I left it my last act was to knock the ingrate down. He's hungered for revenge. That's why he's here tonight."

A cry, "It's a bloomin' lie!" A scuffle, ended as suddenly as it began, by prompt action on the part of Stahl and Faraway. A subdued muttering and hisses from the crowd. A toss of Anholt's head, telling of contempt immeasurable, and then a resumption of the strange address.

"Now suppose we hoist this gentleman on the self same petard that he's used so long. We'll begin the operation by a few short accusations of our own. A few selections, as it were, since 'twould take too long to tell them all. Firstly, as an employee of Smith's Bank of London, he robbed it of five hundred pounds and fled to Canada. Secondly, while in Vancouver he robbed the woman who had accompanied him, of everything she owned, down to her silver comb and brush; fleeing from that place to Australia. Thirdly, while in Sydney, he ruined the home of an Englishman who had befriended him, and then deserted the woman whom he had led astray. Fourthly, as a private in the English army, serving in Hindustan, he was court-martialed for an unspeakable offense and afterward drummed out of camp. Fifthly, while in Chicago, he seduced the daughter of an honest working man, lodged her in a State street tenement, beat her to the point of death, robbed her according to his practice, and tried to throw the crime upon a reputable, unsuspecting man. Those are a few of the past accomplishments of this genteel appearing crook. I——."

With a bound the Englishman was on his feet; eyes bloodshot; face purple; the veins on his forehead standing out like powerful cords. His hand, slipping to his pistol pocket, was caught by Faraway in the

nick of time. Stahl, jumping to his friend's assistance, snatched the weapon from the fingers closing upon it, and with incredible swiftness threw the would-be murderer to the floor. Littleton, who had rushed forward to the platform's edge, waved his hand excitedly, and disregarding both the threatening glances and angry voices ordering him to stop, denounced Anholt as a character assassin of the blackest type; a criminal; a wild man; demanded the aid of every honest citizen in the crowd, in confining him in irons, and promised to sue the town itself on behalf of his outraged clients for suffering this malefactor to speak at all. Dubledіehl, who, meantime, had been permitted to arise, was shoved forcibly in his seat. Then, as Faraway watched him, Stahl, in compliance with a significant nod from Anholt, grabbed the excited attorney by the shoulders and pushed him firmly, and, let it be said, in a manner most undignified, to a less conspicuous place upon the stage. Anholt, who somehow seemed to enjoy the scene immensely, proceeded to finish his speech as if no disturbance had occurred.

"Many of you, my friends, have heard or read of Professor Astrolo, the famous hynotist, who recently has been a most important witness in so many murder trials. Well, one day in company with—this fellow here, I visited this well known man. I had a vague suspicion, mind you, that if the blackguard could, by some means, be thrown into a hypnotic state, one might find out some very curious things. Well, he proved a willing subject—and, he talked. Pardon me for a moment, if I digress again. One time this Dubledіehl came back to England from New Zealand—in hard luck, of course. He always was, when he made a visit home. He urged an uncle, a well-to-do, ambitious chap, to return with him to the Colonies. This uncle, influenced not so much by the prospects of making money, as he was by the desire to be of assistance to his hitherto unfortunate nephew, agreed to go along, to provide the means wherewith to buy and stock a sheep ranch in that far-off land, and to divide the profits half and half. On the voyage the uncle mysteriously disappeared. He has never been heard from to this day. I knew of this and wanted to learn the reason why."

The speaker paused. Slowly, so slow, indeed, that you could scarcely see it move, his head began to turn. A backward step—another—still another. He stood opposite—within three feet of Dubledieh1. His body veered, coming in direct alignment with the face. In the eyes—eyes fastened on a staring, livid, gasping countenance, a merciless glitter played—darted forward like blades of steel upon a cringing, guilty conscience. This time no arm was raised. The avenger stood there motionless; the cold, pitiless, accusing scrutiny searing the other's faculties, even as the wrath of an Almighty God had left its imprint on the brow of Cain.

Was Anholt speaking? No, certainly not! His lips had never moved. And yet, the words—surely—yes, there they were again—"You, Dubledieh1, murdered him!"

"Oh, Christ! Father! No, he doesn't know! He is guessing—guessing, I say! Liar! Liar! Where's the proof, the proof? You—damn you—I'll kill you—you liar—li——."

And now, behold the lightning-like performance of this extraordinary man; of this accuser who a short time since had been the one accused. *Back* to the center of the stage. *Off* with the dead-black covering to the stand. And look! what means that graphophone thus exposed, and that awful challenge? Hark! listen to it reverberating through the room.

"Deny it, you accursed dog! Deny it, you miserable, quaking thief! You seducer of pure womanhood! You, who dismantle happy homes! You, who assassinate the reputations of honest men! You, who strike defenseless women down! You liar! You drunkard! You fraud! You, you confessed murderer of your very kith and kin! I'll make you, you viper, convict yourself! You, do you understand?—out of your own black, venomous mouth, shall bear full witness to your crimes! Listen, ingrate! do you hear that voice? You cur! You murderous crook! Listen now to your confession—in your own voice—made by *you* in the shadows of Astrolo's room! Watch him, Jake—Tom! Hold the scoundrel tight!"

A key was turned; a cylinder started to revolve, and then, following a dull, rasping sound, a voice rang out—a voice magnified to an extent that enabled all to hear, by the costly, perfect instrument.

"I, S. Landseer Dubledіehl, declare this——." "Stop it, I say! Oh! I——."

"to be a true——." "Help! Mr. Littleton! Stop! Let loose, I tell you! I——."

"confession of——." "In the name of God—Oh, Lord Jesus! Stop! Stop! Oh, God! Father Almighty! I—yes—I——."

* * * * *

"The confession, my friends, was also written out and signed by him, while under the hypnotic influence. It, too, is over in Joe Fisher's safe, open to inspection by any one of you. I believe we ought to end this meeting now. Let us, I beg of you, have no demonstration of any kind. You understand why I called you here. Please," as some one evidenced a desire to speak; "please don't decide on anything tonight. I will meet the nominating committee at Fisher's store in the morning. The matter of a candidate to take my place can be handled then, since the polls don't open until noon. Now boys," addressing Stahl, Faraway, and half a dozen others who had crowded on the stage; "we'll try to rig up some plan to hold this fellow Dubledіehl until we can connect with the proper authorities. About Littleton, here, I don't know!" He glanced searchingly at the audience, which apparently indisposed to leave, kept gazing curiously at the group assembled on the platform. "I guess," he said finally, "it'll be safest if he has somebody along. Hi there! Si—Bud!"—calling to the Hawkins brothers just in front. "Will you boys see that Littleton has protection until his train pulls out? Thanks, fellows—out the side door there!" and "That's all right, Littleton! We all make mistakes, but if you want to see daylight again, take my word for it and keep friendly with the shade tonight!"

CHAPTER X.

Early the following evening, the Anholt household, with the exception of Marie and Davey, was gathered on the front porch of that very untypical farmer's home—a porch, long, rambling, and built in the crudest kind of way, but which, liberally provided with hammocks, chairs and rugs, made up in solid comfort for what it lacked in style. Bishop, who had for some time been lost in listless musings—in reveries wherein alluring fancies played, turned suddenly to his friend, on whose knees Eleanor and Stanley were straddled, bouncing up and down like tenderfoots upon a bucking bronco's back.

"May it please Your Honor!" he remarked, "I'd like, exceedingly, to know just how you feel. I suppose now, we're doomed to hear a long acceptance speech."

"My dear fellow, I'm feeling fine and dandy. About the speech, though, that'll be short enough. As a matter of fact my throat's sore yet from last night's jamboree. I"—turning quickly to Dorothy— "was Mr. Wither's calling then?"

"I'm sure not, Van. He was sound asleep when I came out, and Dr. O'Grady said he didn't think he'd wake up for a long time yet. Poor old man!"she added, "he's suffered so much today, and he won't let the locket out of his hand for a minute. Oh, I do so pity him!"

"We all do, dearest! You know," he continued, speaking to no one in particular,"it's a blessed funny thing that I should feel relieved after causing him such misery! I suppose though, it's a sample of the devil lurking in us all!"

"No, Van," corrected the little woman, "it isn't that. It's the feeling that always comes to people who deal honestly with themselves—and with the world. And Mr. Withers—Oh! he'll be a thousand times better off, and a better man too, than he ever was before. Why, he said, only this afternoon, that he'd give anything if he was sure he would live a few years more—just to help somebody to a Christian life!"

From Storey, a low "Amen!"

"Well," commented the husband, "it certainly does look as if the sky was clearing off. There's young Coughlan—George Harry, Bishop! I never will forget that night; and I can't get over your meeting him on that train. Talk about truth versus fiction—and coincidences! I call that the limit. Well, he writes he's doing fine—sticking to his mother like a leech. How's that? And for the encore, along comes Polly Henderson—so the New York papers say—and promises to reform. That's going some, eh?"

"She wouldn't," said Bishop, sententiously, "if Essingham was alive. She wouldn't get the chance."

At Anholt's mention of the woman, Dorothy had given a perceptible start. Where had she heard that name before? Ah, yes! she remembered now. She turned to Bishop:

"Oh, Mr. Bishop! I don't know how I've forgotten so long to ask you Who—what is Polly Henderson? Won't you tell me, please?"

The one she questioned looked imploringly at the minister. "I say, Storey, suppose you give her pedigree."

"My child!"—so the deep voice went—"Polly Henderson is—or was, a bad woman, whose operations were divided between shoplifting and picking other people's pockets. Half of her earnings—or rather, proceeds—went to Essingham. In return he stood as her protector, secured her exemption from prosecution, and once, when she was arrested in a suburban town, provided certain instruments enabling her to escape. It necessitated her seriously injuring a guard, but she managed to get away, and Essingham, luckily for himself, remained undetected—that is by all save Bishop, one other man and myself. I understand that she's turned at last from her wayward life. May our forgiving Master hep and keep her henceforth in His way! Friend Anholt"—abruptly changing the subject,—"hast any notion where Miss Von Bonhorst is?"

"I 'hast' not! Perhaps Dorothy—"

"Goodness knows!" was the quick rejoinder; "*I* don't! She's been awfully upset all day. I think because she was overcome at the meeting last night. I just don't know what to make of it. She didn't go to the store today, and played nearly all morning with Nora, in her room.'

"And baked this afternoon!" supplemented Anholt.

"Yes, what do you think of that? She insisted on making a big lemon pie for Dick Murray, who is guarding Mr. Dubledichl. She says he likes them so, and is going to give it to him for his lunch tonight. Isn't that funny?"

"It's most singular!" and with this reply the minister lapsed into silence; a worried, anxious look hovering on the countenance ordinarily so serene.

Shortly afterward, David Eastman, coming down the road from the direction of the Grote cottage, reached the gate, unlatched it, and hurried toward them.

"Davey walks as if he had a case of fleas," observed Anholt, on seeing him.

"Probably invented another commandment," suggested Bishop. "He always walks that way when he's got something new to spout. If he doesn't have wings within—"

"Mr. Bishop, I'm actually ashamed of you—and you too, Van!" and Dorothy looked reprovingly at the guilty pair. "I think Davey is just a splendid young man. He is,—" but now the object of their comments was nearing the porch.

"Do you know," he volunteered, seating himself in front of his champion and leaning back against the post, "that Miss Von Bonhorst has gone and given Mother Grote—three—hundred—dollars?"

"What!" Four throats gave voice to the word in unison. Anholt leaned forward so unexpectedly that little Stanley, taking fright, tumbled from his father's knee to the floor, raising a cry that for the moment effectually prevented either the fire of questions or Davey's further words from being understood. Seeing this, the young man, after relieving his forehead of the perspiration which his rapid walking had induced, waited patiently for the disturbance to subside. Then, after the child, resorting to its mother's lap, had quieted down to an occasional sob, he continued:

"Indeed, she did! I went over to cut some wood for the cook stove, and she had just gone, and Mother Grote had the money right there on

the table, and she's going back to Germany to take care of her husband. She says that's what Miss Von Bonhorst gave it to her for."

"Well," ejaculated Anholt, "I'll be teetotally dad pounded!"

"That's mild," said Bishop. "Words don't express it!"

Storey who had jumped up and stepped off the porch, stood facing the bearer of the extraordinary news.

"See here, Davey! Tell us exactly what the old woman said. Try to remember *everything.*" Even in the growing dusk one could observe a look of intense anxiety on the minister's face. Then, before the young man had opportunity to reply, he added, "My friends, you'll acquit me of pessimism, but I—"

"For goodness sake, dear fellow!" interrupted Anholt, "take it easy. Because Marie doesn't happen to be around for supper, and because she's taken a sudden liberal streak, is no sign that everything has gone to the demnition bow-bows. That's her way of celebrating my emancipation. Go on Davey; let's have your recitation!"

"Yes boy—go on, go on!" All noticed the minister's uncertain, husky voice.

"Indeed, there isn't anything more to tell, only Mother said she asked her all about her home and husband again, and made her promise to go right back so she could have a little happiness before she died. That's all she told me. Oh, yes! she told me too, that Miss Von Bonhorst seemed kind of blue and talked as if maybe, she would have to go away herself. That's everything she said. I'm sure of't," and he settled back once more against the post.

"And that," commented Storey, "is enough! My friends, something has strangely affected Ma—Miss Von Bonhorst. Why should we delude ourselves? She has been, since her fainting spell last night, totally unlike herself. Mrs. Anholt"—looking at Dorothy,—"is it—do you believe it possible that she's mentally—temporarily troubled, considering everything that occurred today?"

Dorothy, who could no more equivocate than utter a direct falsehood, answered him after a moment's hesitation:

"I just don't know what to think, Mr. Storey. Marie has acted awfully odd today, but then—I guess, considering last night, we all have! I do wonder though, where in the world she can be now!"

Storey, without a word, his head bare and coat sleeves turned well back toward his elbows, started for the gate, passed out into the road, and became, as he headed for the town, lost in the deepening gloom.

"He's got me going now," said Anholt, after the worried lover had disappeared, and drawing Eleanor, now asleep, gently to his breast. "It *is* funny, when you come to figure it right down about Marie. What with walking the floor all night, neglecting the store today, staying away from supper, and then handing over three hundred plunks to Mother Grote, I'm blessed if I don't feel creepy myself! Hello! he's coming back,"—the "he" referring to Storey, who had closed the gate with a bang, and was moving rapidly to them. "What ho! brother—you're back quick."

The big man came forward without replying, stepped upon the porch, and settled himself again in his customary seat.

"I am intensely relieved," he proffered finally. "Miss Von Bonhorst has been to the store, and sent us word by young Sammy Trout—I met him down the road—that she intends making some calls tonight. I should judge from her message, she'll probably be late in getting home. It's very gratifying news—very!" a self-consolatory remark evoking neither approving nor disapproving comment. If the minister felt cheered by the information just imparted, well and good. As for the rest—well, it furnished additional food for thought, at least.

Anholt and Dorothy carried the sleeping children to their room. Later the man returned, joining his friends in a silent contemplation of the recent strange developments. He must, within the next half hour, start toward the town. The polls had closed at six o'clock. Ten minutes later the official count had been announced. At half past eight the jollification meeting, to be held in the space opposite Joe Fisher's store, would have its start, and he, as chief beneficiary of his fellow townsmen's votes, felt obliged, by all the rules that have to bear on political affairs, to hold himself in readiness to play a more or less conspicuous part. For the

present though, the moments were his own—his to do with as he would. He chose to indulge in a retrospect of the occurrences of yesterday and today.

As promised, he had called that morning at Fisher's store, prepared to receive with a submissive spirit the reproaches and abuse which he fully expected would be meted out to him. Instead, he found his stock standing higher, immeasurably, than par, and discovered that so far as his enforced candidacy was concerned, he not only would be obliged to run for the mayorship, but that no other resident in all Red Hill, could be induced to stand against him. Thus his preconceived idea as to the result of his confession on the public mind was thoroughly dispelled. Thus was the folly which he had labored under for long years past disclosed in its true light. Thus had truth been vindicated. Thus had his fellow men been revealed as being charitable, reasonable, just, and not, as he had pictured them in delusions lasting for so long, as bigoted, unfair and relentless persecutors of the man who chanced to err. Thus he learned that it is not the truth revealed through frank confession that makes a mockery of life, but truth concealed and covered by evasion, silence and deceit.

He had never yet been greeted with such cheery voices, such hearty hand-clasps, or such friendly faces. Never before had his head been held so high. Never had his gaze been so frank, or his mind so utterly at ease, as on this, the morning following his release.

Yes, Bishop had been right. He *would* be Mayor of this Dakota town, and furthermore would serve the full term out. His plans—his friends' plans, could wait another year. Because of what Red Hill had done for him; because of its display of confidence in his honesty and faith; because in spite of all that he had been and done, they still commanded, urged, entreated him to be their head and guide, he would answer to the call; would give these loyal friends the benefit of his time, his labor, of whatever ability he possessed; would consecrate himself, so long as they desired, to furthering their interests and the town's substantial growth. Then, having done all this, might he not feel indeed, that Providence would aid him in the greater work; that this, in truth,

might prove to be a mere experimental school, wherein equipment would be found, essential to the consummation of the plans which Storey, Bishop and himself had formed?

And now, his thoughts reverted to another, a more unpleasant situation to be faced. There was Dubledіehl, for whose safe confinement, temporarily, some provision must be made. Scotland Yard had been communicated with. Likewise the British Government. Undoubtedly they would cable some advice, but until the time of its receipt, the man must be secured. Red Hill had no prison. Heretofore offenders had been taken to the county seat. With Dubledіehl however, considering the circumstances under which he was being held, such a procedure was obviously inadvisable. Besides, Beaver Junction was a mere side issue now, and no Red Hillian possessing a single gram of self-respect, would consent to risking the custody of a world-wide criminal such as this, to the doubtful security of their neighbor's calaboose. Dick Murray, the one-legged constable of Red Hill, was the proud owner of a pair of manacles, and a ball and chain. These, after the meeting of the previous evening, had been securely fastened on the unexpected prisoner, who had then been ordered in no uncertain terms to hie himself to a corner of the church, where he was kept for the balance of the night, under the watchful eyes of Murray and Faraway. As a matter of fact, there was no more secure place of confinement in all Red Hill than this same church, erected by Storey but a few short months before. The doors, both at the main entrance and at the rear, were heavy, massive affairs of solid oak. The windows, placed ten feet above the floor, offered when closed, no encouragement whatever for escape. A prisoner—especially one ironed as Dubledіehl was, stood no more chance of escaping than do political offenders incarcerated in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. True, he had abundant room for exercise, if the guard permitted, but exercise with manacled wrists and an iron ball tugging at one's foot, is likely to be the Omega of a man's desires, however athletically inclined he may ordinarily be. It cannot be said that Storey evidenced any bubbling enthusiasm over this desecration of an edifice of which he was so inordinately proud, and, while bowing to the necessity justifying its use as a tempo-

rary jail, he announced in a voice chiefly noticeable for its vigor, that if, within forty-eight hours, the town had not provided a more appropriate hold-over for its prisoner he would turn him loose on his own recognizance. Whereat the leading citizens went into executive session and ordered a force of carpenters to build an addition to Faraway's blacksmith shop forthwith—at the town's expense. This, they figured, would be finished by tomorrow evening. Meanwhile, Dick Murray and an assistant took up their posts outside the church and alternately dozed and watched. During the afternoon, Anholt, Storey and Bishop, while seated in the latter's office, arrived at a definite understanding as to their future course. They would remain in Red Hill until Anholt had completed his two years' term of office. Each had his work to do. Each enjoyed it. Each felt that he was young enough to wait. "And anyhow," said Anholt, summing the situation up; "at the present rate of Storey's progress it'll be that long before the Mendelssohn—."

"My friend," the minister had retorted, picking up his hat; "there were a lot of 'Red Coats' once, way back East in a little town called Trenton. They were listening for march music too. It didn't come, but they woke up anyhow."

"Which means?" inquired Anholt.

"That the Delaware, my friend, is still navigable by brave and cautious men."

* * * * * * * * * * * *

"Dearest!"—Anholt started from his dreams—"do you know it's twenty minutes after eight?"

"What! Jerusalem—no! Here, you fellows," as he hastened indoors for his hat, "get busy! This time I'll let you all in on the ceremonies."

"Why, bright eyes!" he exclaimed a moment later, as he bestowed a parting kiss on Dorothy's lips; "you look glum. I thought you'd be happy as a lark."

"Van dear!"—the soft arms encircled his neck—"It's about Marie. I'm Oh! so dreadfully worried. You know dear, she had Nora with her nearly all the morning in her room, and she would come out at times and put her arms around me and cry—just awfully. And I remember

now, she said she wanted Mother Grote to be with her husband again, because she said it was so beautiful to see old people who were true to one another, end their days together. Dearie, don't you think Mr. Storey ought to try and find her?"

"If you insist, sweetheart. It looks to me though, as if you were all turning an ant hill into a mountain range. By the way—about that pie of Murray's! Since she isn't here I suppose I'd better deliver it myself. Where is the blessed thing?"

"She took it with her, dear, this afternoon. I—."

"Well, for the love of goodness! Poor Dick! I'd like to see what it resembles when he gets it. So long, dearest! Keep an eye on Mr. Withers. When he wakes it'll make him feel good, probably, if you'll talk to him," and Red Hill's first and unanimously elected Mayor, joined his waiting body guard.

CHAPTER XI.

The time—midnight. The place—the interior of All Men's Church. The darkness—relieved by rays of pale moonlight penetrating unwashed, high set window panes. A restless figure, tossing uncomfortably upon a narrow bench, endeavoring vainly to find forgetfulness in Morphean embrace. A rustling sound—over in the shadow where the organ stands. A noise—light—nearly inappreciable, as though made by a phantom lingering there. Muttered words—at times unintelligible, incoherent, issuing from the recumbent being's lips. Hands—in the shadows the manacles are unobserved—raised to a fevered brow, then working nervously on back through dry, disheveled hair. Eyes—staring through the terrifying gloom; opening, closing, in fruitless efforts to evade some ghastly sight—to escape the hideous, mocking pictures, intruding their presence everywhere—unappeasable memories—frightful visions, developed from the darkness all around.

"Funny, this!" Now we understand the words. "Bloomin' tough! and no brandy—soda. Shaky? Well, rather! Strange, isn't it, I can't sleep? Humph! this worry's all bally rot. They can't prove—anything. I need sleep—that's all—sleep!" His words gradually grow inaudible. He turns now, upon his side. the action accompanied by the dismal clank of an iron chain; by the impact of a rounded mass of metal against the adjacent wall. No, that won't do! It's less comfortable even, than lying on one's back. He starts to turn again, but hold! Whence that low, faint melody, soft as a zephyr carried to his ears, calling his troubled conscience to full wakefulness again? His head is raised; he assumes a sitting posture; his ironed hands acting as a half support. Pshaw! 'tis nothing—nothing but a mere hallucination encouraged by the midnight silence—by this memory provoking solitude. He will *compel* the attendance of nerve soothing, restful slumber. He is behaving—so he assures himself—like a foolish infant; like a child, frightened and conjuring dire misfortunes and appari-

tions from the dark. He lowers himself again, cautiously, until his head touches the inhospitable board. He trusts now to procure some rest, when—Oh! most unbelievable, most fiendish—satanically devised of tortures! Again the melody, the strains—increasing now in volume, of an old New Zealand love song; of a story set to music and hummed in the Antipodes by every courting swain, and here—now, usurping, trespassing on the reigning quietude. That voice—Oh! what hellish, diabolical punishment is this? Whose ghostly fingers are those playing in the shadows on responsive, ivory keys? This is no dream, no fancy, no imaginary sound. To hell with the manacles! To hell with the cumbersome, restraining ball of iron! He *will* find out! This is no delirium, no insanity, no appalling, spectral dream. No! No! No! a thousand times. The voice—the song—the breathing instrument. He will see—discover—know what necromant is working this accursed trick. He bends over, takes the spherical, weighty impediment in his hands, and walk unsteadily, haltingly along the aisle. He nears the organ. The notes drop—become sweeter. The softly uttered words recall, aye, even here, the fragrance of those distant hills. They bring also to mind—Oh! God forbid that our pen now should venture to portray the damning, awful recollections tearing at this prisoner's heart. And now, look, the silvery satellite—faithful guardian of the night, reappears from behind a transient cloud. Her rays, brilliant as a calcium light upon the stage, move diagonally across the room. One especially—note how bright it is—envelopes the organ, darts across its top, disclosing—Oh, miracle of all great miracles!—the pale inexpressibly saddened countenance of the musician of this midnight hour.

Bang! Crash! The iron weight drops from nerveless hands—hands that momentarily cover a face wherein is pictured abject fear—endeavoring to exclude a vision presaging some direful retributory act. Now the voice—half in entreaty, half in terror, is heard. A single word is uttered—a woman's name:

"Marie!"

The music ceases. The slender fingers remain motionless upon the keyboard. The dark eyes—lustrous—strangely, unnaturally bright, pierce to the innermost recesses of the craven wretch's brain. The reply comes, in tones calm and emotionless, like the night itself.

"Yes, Lawrence, it's Marie."

The cringing poltroon stands transfixed—staring—speechless. The woman arises, faces him, waits patiently for him to speak. He cannot. Her lips at last open. She speaks again:

"Lawrence, there is a little girl. You—are the father."

No reply. The coward has lost all mastery of his tongue. He steps backward—once—twice—out of the ray of light. The woman, dark-robed, advances—follows him. Once more the passionless voice:

"Your wife, Lawrence, they say, is dead. You will keep your promise now, and marry me—for our baby's sake—you will do that, won't you?"

"Humph!" Partial control of his faculties is regained. This is no supernatural event. The woman is of flesh and blood. He ought to know—ought he not?

"Jolly chance, haven't I," he mutters, finally, "to marry anybody here? Nice looking bridegroom, too, I'd be, in irons! How is it?—tell me, woman; how did you—Marie, for God's sake! tell me—how did you get here?"

"Lawrence, you will marry me—here—tonight. I will send for a minister—a friend of mine. It's our child, you know, I'm thinking of."

Now see! the man moves forward. The sensual face is again revealed as the moonbeam falls upon it. Was that a flash of hope, or a subtle gleam telling of trickery, discernible for an instant only in the eyes?

"And if I do, Marie—you'll help me—have these damned chains and handcuffs taken off? That's the understanding, eh?"

"Lawrence"—marvelous how evenly the words come forth—"is the legitimacy of our little girl to be purchased only by another wrong? Isn't it enough, that I, in marrying you, renounce my friends—my prospects; that I advertise my sin to all the world? You—you whom I knew, and loved, and trusted under the name you gave me then—the

name of Lawrence Deal—can't you—is it impossible for you to do one just—one honorable deed? Won't you make some small atonement for the misery you brought to me, by doing as I ask? You will—won't you, help me to reclaim our child from bastardism? Lawrence, you will do this for the little one, won't you?"

Thus she in turn becomes the pleading one. He believes the advantage rests with him. He plucks up courage—nears her.

"How do you think I can marry you this way? But I will, upon my word and honor, go through the farce if you'll agree to help me out of this. That's fair, isn't it?"

"Lawrence, if I can help it, you never will be free. But you must—you must marry me tonight. Yes, I know, they'll call me crazy, and sneer at me—at a woman low enough to wed a mur——. Lawrence, I shall send now, for my friend, the minister. You will agree to this, won't you, Lawrence? You know it means everything to our little one!"

Now his real character, in its full and ugly viciousness, asserts itself. The iron bound wrists are raised as if to strike the woman down. No, he can torture her more effectually by words. "Humph! me marry you—a common harlot! Do you suppose I haven't got another wife—yes, and children, too? Not a flock of bastards, but they're clean, they are. And my wife's a woman. She's no filthy prostitute. Why don't you hunt up the real father of your kid? That fellow Anholt—like as not it's——."

"Stop, you coward!" Oh! that pen could describe the passionate force and intensity of the cry, or the black eyes flashing like electric sparks, or the attitude, like unto a wild beast ready for the spring. "You white-livered, venal wretch! You robber of my chastity—destroyer of my honor! You dirty, lying cur! Look now on me—on me whose ruin you accomplished by your plausible, specious, sugar-coated words! Me, your affianced bride, mother of the child that you renounce—the child whose eyes and features give proof of your paternity. Look! look, I say! Gloat if you will over this mockery of womanhood, this moral wreck, this human thing you've made! Look!

and pray—pray you devil—monster, for your soul's salvation! for I—I, Marie Von Bonhorst, here—tonight, shall mete out vengeance for my wrongs! Pray! I tell you—dastard—pray! for here—now, you dog, you villian—here—now, I say, by heaven, you shall die!"

No tigress pouncing on her unsuspecting prey; nō thunderbolt descending from a cloudless sky, ever crushed its victim under impact more terrific than is this. Quick as the lightning's flash a blade of cruel, remorseless metal glitters in the moonlight—shoots downward, forward, penetrating to the seat of life. A thud—a moan—a twitching movement of the body, unobservable in the dark. Thus does the blood of generations past; of an ancestry indigenous to southern climes; of a chivalry where death alone was held the price of woman's wrongs, reassert and prove itself.

But observe, the woman is bending—stooping over the silent, motionless corpse. Now she tugs, pulls on the imbedded piece of steel. It gives, loosens, is withdrawn. She is back now, standing in the shimmering light—examining the dripping, bloody thing. She laughs—or no, that weird, demonical, heartless sound—*that* is not laughter. What evidence of merriment is there in the voice? 'Tis an echo, doubtless, of Hadean greetings to the long expected, welcome guest. But the woman—Marie—she is talking; loudly, rapidly; caring little whether she is heard or not:

"The journey—surely 'tis a tempting one! So easily, so quickly made! Oh! Nora, Melville, Dorothy, Van—live, enjoy your sweet, deserved happiness. Beloved friends—and Oh, Nora! my dimpled darling; my—oh! my——. Stop! Stop!—these thoughts would make you faint. Quick! before your courage melts away!"

See! the left hand is moving—flying to the throat. Rip—the fastenings to the waist are sundered; then, the corset cover—torn likewise apart. The corset itself—here both hands, one grasping the crimson knife, pull nervously, fiercely at the clasps. It, too, is opened. The left hand clutches that side which overlaps the heart; pulls it back, back

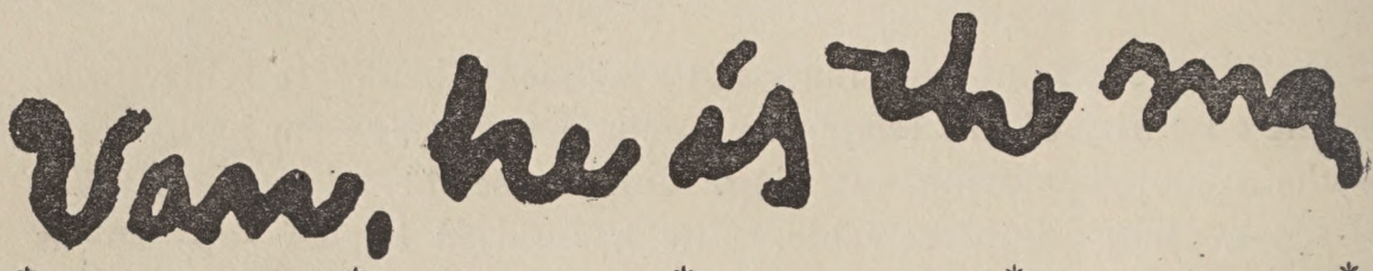
—still further back. The right hand is poised aloft. The voice, "Courage! Courage! Strike hard—swift!" and down for the second time with unerring, deadly aim, flashes the gleaming instrument of death.

Two bodies—saint and sinner but a moment since—are lying there, in the obscurity of this temporary tomb. Dead? Yes—or hark! One —the woman, is moving, speaking. Can you see her?—there, that dim shadow, almost imperceivable. She has raised herself—up—up—is resting on her elbow. Be quiet, will you! she's talking—muttering to herself:

"They may—Oh! Van, if they should—if you should be accused—if —if they thought that you—did this! Oh! if I could—if pen—how can I—save——." She stops, turns her eyes toward the platform as if inspired, and looks—stares at the pure white wall behind; where the moonlight from the nearest window falls upon it. She lowers herself again to the floor—moves—begins to crawl slowly, oh! so slowly, toward the steps. Now, at last, she reaches them—if it was lighter you could see a trail of blood behind. Watch her! She is—yes, she will succeed in pulling her body up. How she suffers! See, the blade is still imbedded in her breast! She is on the stage—stretched there, motionless. Too late! or no, her arm is extended just ahead. She is advancing again, almost imperceptibly, over, closer to that square light playing on the wall. Nearer, nearer, no—yes, she will—she has—she is there before it. ,

Notice with what effort, with what incredible torture she manages to raise herself. her marble countenance facing the spot covered by the pale moonbeam. Her left hand supports her. Her right—watch it. It withdraws the knife. Now her finger is rubbed here and there upon her breast. Now she raises it—see! it is dripping with her blood. She begins to write in crimson letters on the wall; in letters unsteady, ill proportioned, but decipherable. Again the finger hunts the wound. Two more words are added. A third time she repeats the act, and then strength fails. The arm drops, then the head, then—a convulsive movement of the body. In sinking it turns—the head and torso resting against the

white background—the ghastly, glassy eyes staring hideously out, into the impenetrable gloom. Above the black, luxuriant locks, this proof of her friend's innocence; this message recorded with her life blood as it ebbed away:



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Ten minutes later, Dick Murray, who had, immediately after eating a delicious lemon pie, presented him by Miss Von Bonhorst, sunk into a most unaccountable doze, peeped into the church. In another hour all Red Hill was up and doing. The body of Marie was taken immediately to Anholt's home, That of Dubledichl was left where it was found. When morning came it had disappeared; none knew how, nor why, nor when. There were perhaps a dozen wiseacres who held that certain citizens well known to all, could easily, if so disposed, solve the mystery. Others, whose orthodoxy held them inalienably to a doctrine emphasizing the existence of a material Hell and Devil, contended that Satan had disregarded conventionalities and personally called and carried off his own. Still others, scientifically inclined, argued that the whole solution might be found in this: Here was a body, housing for years, a corrupt and rotten mind; a mind so polluted that the flesh itself had become contaminated through proximity to it. Death came; decay and decomposition took a hand; the body was ripe for dissolution, and thus a few short hours, instead of months, sufficed to resolve it into its original elements.

CHAPTER XII.

'Tis eventide at Lovers' Roost. Pinkish tints suffuse the vaulted heavens; tints soft and restful, hovering like warm blushes on the cheeks of modesty. The air is redolent of fragrant, sweet perfume; with the scent of lilacs wafted on light zephyrs, capricious as the mind of Eve. Twilight falls, and the earth, and trees, and shrubs, are mantled by the mystic, tranquilizing haze. And we, who wander thoughtlessly atop the curving ridge; we, whose footsteps long have traveled in the ways of peace; we, whose placid lives, like azure, soft, Italian skies, have never known a cloud; we, who live within ourselves, and doze serenely while the world moves on; we—even we, now pause and wonder—wonder at the weird, fantastic movements of the figures gathered underneath yon maple tree. And we, who loitering uninvited, watch and marvel at the curious sight, start back astonished, now that vision penetrates the dusk, and lays the sacred mystery bare. We call it sacred—aye! because our eyes rest now upon a flower strewn mound, and bared heads too, are visible—three of them, on manly shoulders, lowered reverentially toward the ground. Observe—one figure, massive, tall, drops down upon his knees—remains there, motionless, for a time. He rises—a prayer undoubtedly was made. They turn—the three—are moving slowly, silently, toward the ridge—over to the sheltered seat—the nook, where but one year ago today the man of God proclaimed his love. And he—speaks now, softly, as if unto himself. But this time the woman hears him not. His friends catch now and then, and understand the low toned words. They give neither answer nor rebuke. He too, in time will be like them, and *they* are blessed with that enduring peace which passeth the understanding of all men. They, have found deep sorrow but a prelude to content. They, have reached the harbor where calm, unruffled waters run; where the perils of life's wild, tumul-

tuous sea are mercifully unknown. Their wounds are healed; their memories at rest; their anxiety dispelled. But now, their friend is speaking—this time unquestionably to them.

"Anholt—Bishop! My friends, my comrades!" We, hidden in the shadows, manage with difficulty to understand the words. "One year ago, on an evening such as this my—Marie and I sat here. It was then two days—only, before her death. She expressed a longing—a wish, that she might forever rest—over yonder—there, where we placed her. My friends, that is my wish too; to lie beside her, near her,—ready when the great awakening comes, to claim possession of my queen—my princess—my bride to be, through the eternal centuries."

We, who linger in the gathering shades. We, who listen to this strange request, hear neither promise nor response. Instead, we note three pairs of eyes—three faces, mute and solemn, turned instinctively toward the west. And we, who stand here, fearful lest our presence be betrayed, imagine—seek to read the silent trio's minds; strive to picture to ourselves the visions of things that were, and are, and those which hope declares will be, discernible to them alone. But we can only guess—can but divine the panorama open to their ken.

And now, one of them speaks. May not his words, uttered as they leave the place, help us to a fuller appreciation of their peculiar acts and moods? We hear the voice, distinctly, as they move away:

"Fellows! when all is said and done; when I compare the various dogmas, creeds and religions of the world; when I consider, Storey, your interpretation of the Master's words; when I recall the lessons taught me at my mother's knee; when I think of the unselfish counsel of my beloved wife; when I measure the martyrdom of a noble spirit like Marie; when I see men rise and fall, and suffer and enjoy; when I review the past year—the first of genuine freedom since my boyhood days—the only year in which existence seemed really worth the while; when I think of all these things, with the strength and beauty of the truths they emphasize, I feel like falling on my knees and thanking God for making Stanley Hope

my friend. Stanley Hope, who revealed to me their true significance in my hour of gravest doubt! Stanley Hope—ever loyal, ever generous, ever uplifting those to whom life seems a dreary, hopeless thing! Stanley Hope, the man of Christ, the friend of friends, the one who, in a single sentence of three words—'Honesty without qualification'—frames a recipe, which, if used, would insure the happiness of mankind!"

THE END.

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